

The Sci-Fi Channel is now in Europe, Latin America, and stores near you.

BY ALLISON VILLONE

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL IS TOUCHING DOWN all over the world—broadcasting science fiction, fantasy, classic horror, and science fact—to viewers in Europe and Latin America, as well as from coast to coast.

The Sci-Fi Channel will be available as an English language service via cable and DTH in European countries including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the

Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark.*

Although programming will be presented in English, some primetime shows will air with Dutch or Swedish subtitles in appropriate countries.

Favorite series coming in the future to the Sci-Fi

tion programming. This expansion is due to the enthusiastic response from viewers in nineteen countries including Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina.

The new *Sabados* morning lineup will include three hours of animation, including cartoons like *Teknoman* and *Battletech*—never before seen in Latin America. Daytime series will include *The Incredible Hulk*, *Buck Rogers*, *Swamp Thing*, *Weird Science*, and *Sequester DSV*. The evening lineup features *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *The Twilight Zone*. Plus, *Sabados de Sci-Fi* has exclusive Latin American rights to *American Gothic*,** the eerie new series starring Gary Cole, written and produced by Shaun Cassidy—also premiering on CBS in the USA this fall.

Sabados viewers can go online and get news about *Sabados de Sci-Fi* in Spanish in *The Dominion*, our Internet site in the World Wide Web (<http://www.scifi.com>). A programming schedule, monthly programming highlights, show descriptions, episode listings, casting information, news flashes, and opportunities to give feedback to the network and communicate with fellow fans all over the world will all be featured. Check it out for more information.

If you're not traveling to Europe or Latin America, you can still find the Sci-Fi Channel at another exciting locale: your local shopping mall, home to the Sci-Fi Channel's newest enterprise, *Sci-Fi Trader* corners in Spencer Gifts stores. Forty locations in cities such as New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington,



European and Latin American viewers will cut their teeth on razor-sharp horror, suspense and sci-fi films like *An American Werewolf in London*.

Channel in Europe include *Six Million Dollar Man*, *Night Gallery*, *Amazing Stories*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Ray Bradbury Theater*, *Outer Limits*, *Voyagers*, *Swamp Thing*, *Misfits of Science*, and *Night Stalker*. Movies such as *Firestarter*, *Flash Gordon*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Howling*, *Red Sonja*, *An American Werewolf in London* and *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* will be featured. A variety of specials, cartoons and more will also be shown.

For viewers in Latin America, *Sabados de Sci-Fi*, "the channel within a channel" found on USA Network on Saturdays, has increased from a thirteen-hour block to a full day (7AM-6AM ET) of science fic-



and Seattle now feature Sci-Fi Channel areas where you can buy *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* merchandise, grab other science fiction goodies, and even pick up copies of *Sci-Fi Entertainment*. TV monitors showcasing Sci-Fi Channel programming and graphics will be featured in each store.

If your local Spencer Gifts outlet does not have a *Sci-Fi Trader*, stay tuned—because new locations may be added soon. □

* Tentative; information subject to change.

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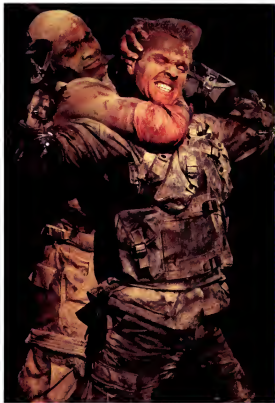
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Solo: The People's One-Man Army; Disney and Dreamworks: Partners?

BY ROBERT MARTIN

SOLO (MARIO VAN PEEBLES) IS THE ULTIMATE ASSASSIN—a warrior made not of flesh and blood, but of polyplastics and fluids who can carry out the government's most dangerous and top-secret operations anywhere in the world, and be repaired on-site. He is the best covert warrior money can buy.

On a classified mission in the jungles of South America, Solo aborts a mission to explode a rebel air base when he hears the voice of a child nearby. To annihilate the base would violate his directive "to protect the unit team and non-combatants." But when the officer in charge of the project, Colonel William Madden (William Sadler), learns of Solo's unexpected "soft spot,"



Mario van Peebles stars as the synthetic assassin, Solo.

he orders the machine to be sent back to the States for total reprogramming.

But because Solo's programming also requires him to seek his own survival, he hijacks a helicopter, escaping with little power and no plan. When he stops inside an ancient Mayan temple to recharge, he is discovered by a young boy, Miguel (Abraham Verdugo), who takes him home to his village, which turns out to have survival problems of its own.

David Corley's screenplay for *Solo* promises an interesting blend of *The Seven Samurai*, Asimov's "Laws of

Robotics," lots of one-man-army action, and left-of-center politics. Van Peebles—last seen in *Black Panther*—seems to savor the role's combination of political consciousness with all the expected elements of a high-concept action picture. "Solo is a fugitive who is ten times faster and fifteen times stronger than an average man," he says. "When he escapes into this country in which the military is not supposed to have a presence, getting him out becomes a top priority. Solo is a trained killer; but he's also a very complicated individual. He is capable of taking out entire units, but he begins to discriminate about who he will and won't kill. Solo discovers that he has to relearn everything he knows. And then Miguel tells him quite innocently, 'Yes, we are always learning. That's what makes us human.'"

The village also offers Solo a romantic interest, if his programmed emotions are up to it, in the guise of Seidy Lopez, the Latina ingenue of *Mi Vida Loca*. Tristar has the epic penciled in for a spring release.

Also coming out of left field is Costa-Gavras, the Greek director behind such politically charged thrillers as *Z* and *Burn*, with his first sci-fi epic. *Experiment* is a story of recombinant DNA gone wild, budgeted at \$30 million and entirely financed by Gaumont, France's only viable film company, though it will be filmed in English. American distribution rights are with Paramount Pictures.

This column, you may have noticed, has been closely following the development of the new superstudio Dreamworks SKG, especially in regard to its various alliances with such high-tech concerns as Silicon Graphics, IBM, and especially Microsoft, whose own alliance with the TCI cable companies could transform their Microsoft Network into the first viable interactive network. In the last couple of months, however, all of that has been overshadowed, first by Microsoft's very cosy relationship with Ted Turner, and then by the Disney Studios' acquisition of ABC/Capital Cities, which has its own multimedia outlets brewing via local telephone networks as well as cable and satellite. As a result, Disney seems likely to greet the new century with the best media distribution network of any studio—and, at the same time, Disney's got a major leg-up on "new media" products. Disney Interactive, Disneyvision and the Disney alliance with Pixar studios (read all about these geniuses elsewhere in this issue) are all preparing the kind of next-generation entertainment product that will

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The most remarkable result of all this is that even Dreamworks itself has become a Disney ally. Several months ago, Dreamworks reached an agreement with ABC to develop programming for the network, in particular its rather weak Saturday morning lineup. When Disney bought ABC, the showbiz trades predicted a quick death to the ABC-Dreamworks alliance, figuring Disney would rather fill ABC's Saturdays with their own animated product—especially since Dreamworks' Jeffrey Katzenberg and his former boss at Disney, Michael Eisner, were considered to be at war.

The press, so far, appears to have called this one wrong; both Dreamworks and Disney say that the ABC-Dreamworks deal is still on, and Katzenberg and Eisner have even gone so far as to pay compliments to one another in various interviews. And this, of course, makes eminent good sense—Disney, at this point, has no way to predict how many hours of programming they might need to fill within its various distribution channels in another five years or so, when Dreamworks' production capacity starts to take off. And Disney will be far better off by strengthening its own hand with Dreamworks products than it will be by turning it over to the competition. And the fact that a long-time Spielberg buddy, Michael Ovitz, left the Creative Artists Agency to become Disney's second-in-command cannot hurt.



Robin (Chris O'Donnell) returns to help Batman (Val Kilmer) combat Mr. Freeze (Patrick Stewart) and Poison Ivy (Demi Moore).

Though all of these mega-corp alliances make this writer nervous (when corporations get bigger, people sometimes seem to get smaller), this deal looks likely to create a windfall for consumers. Disney is poised to set the pace for innovative 21st century entertainment, and everyone else's efforts to keep up should make for some lively times ahead.

Speaking of Saturday morning, the *Super-*

man animated series has finally emerged from the planning stages to go into active production. Thirteen episodes are on order for broadcast within the WB Network's Saturday morning lineup. Much of the same creative team behind Fox's *Batman* series is involved, but the product, while it may share some of the "retro" qualities of *Batman*, will be considerably brighter in tone.

Plans for the next *Batman* picture are already falling in place, with the superhero cast of Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell returning for another go-round with director Joel Schumacher. The plan is to pit the Dynamic Duo against Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy, roles to be filled by *Generations*' Patrick Stewart and Demi Moore, though terms aren't entirely settled as yet.

The Fox Animation Studios have announced their first feature project, *Anastasia*, to be produced and directed by Don Bluth, the maverick Disney animator who struck out on his own with such pictures as *An American Tale*, *The Secret of NIMH*, and *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, as well as the groundbreaking interactive animation of *Dragon's Lair*. The film will be a musical retelling of the life of the last Russian czar's daughter.

New Line Pictures has tapped Mark Dippe—a former ILM digital effects wizard—to direct *Spaton*, based on the Rob Liefeld comic, and Warner Brothers is eager to get started on an adaptation of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* comic book series. The

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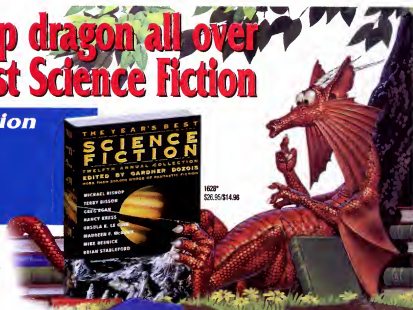
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Sandman script is now in the works under the supervision of producers Alan Rice and Tony Ludwig. The same producing team is behind a plan to adapt Marvel's blind superhero *Daredevil* to the big screen for Fox, and, for Spelling International, the feature *Einstein's Room*, which concerns a 12-year-old who uncovers the long-buried secrets of the nuclear physicist. Joe (*Explorers*) Dante is expected to direct the latter. Meanwhile, Joe has directed a pilot for a proposed ABC-TV series based on the recent suspense film, *Hackers*.

Tim Burton dropped two bombshells in a row in late summer. His office recently issued an announcement that he was no longer going to produce any films by other directors—which, if so, leaves several projects orphaned, including a planned adaptation of Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. A few days later, Burton announced plans to build an animation studio in San Francisco (near his old school chum John Lasseter of Pixar). Upon the completion of *Mars Attacks*, the Tim Burton Animation Company's first production, a puppet-animated film in the style of *Nightmare Before Christmas* and the upcoming *James and the Giant Peach*, will go into full swing, for release by Warner Brothers. Entitled *The Corpse Bride*, the film will be a dark fairy tale about a young man who finds himself wed to a corpse. No word yet as to whether it will be a musical.

If you've been waiting for Ridley Scott to

make another science fiction film, you can start counting the days. His next picture, as yet untitled, will be a drama starring Demi Moore as a woman enrolled in an elite naval combat training school; that will be followed by *Metropolis*—not a remake of Fritz Lang's 1926 classic, says Scott, but more in the vein of *Blade Runner*. The *Hollywood Reporter* quoted Scott's press representative: "The film asks the question, in a world where anything is possible, is life worth living?" We're willing to bet this one is not a musical.

If Preston Sturges is a familiar name, go to the head of the class—40 years ago, he was one of Hollywood's premier writer-directors. His son, also named Preston Sturges, is among the first to place a script with the fledgling Dreamworks studio; his screenplay *Disconnect* concerns an experimental drug that relieves pain by setting the human soul free from the body—resulting in a very cinematic "trip." Mick Garris, who directed the Stephen King miniseries, *The Stand*, brought the screenplay to Dreamworks' attention, and may serve as producer.

Nora Ephron was all set to direct *Michael*, a "high-concept" comedy about an earthbound angel for Universal, but the director and studio failed to come to terms on casting. Ephron has taken the project to Ted Turner's outfit and expects to start shooting this winter.

When a man encounters his "doppelganger"—his exact double—doom is not far

behind, according to legend. This ancient superstition inspired Dostoevsky's short novel *The Double*, which Roman Polanski is now preparing for Mandalay Entertainment. He's pursuing Jack Nicholson for the title role.

Herbert Simmons, a former FBI agent, believed the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* were too similar to his own creation of a few years ago, the "Star Rangers." He took Saban Entertainment, the MMPR's producers, to court. But U.S. Federal District Court Judge Manuel Real found the case without merit, and it was immediately dismissed.

Columbia Pictures and Jim Henson Productions intend to team up for *Fish Tale*, a script now in progress by screenwriter Hans Bauer, whose *Anacondra* is now shooting in Brazil. The story concerns five kids who are determined to catch a legendary giant fish.

Melissa Matheson, who wrote the screenplays for *ET* and *The Indian in the Cupboard*, recently completed *Kundun*, a screenplay based on the life of Tibet's current Dalai Lama; Martin Scorsese, who just finished shooting *Casino*, is said to be interested in the project.

Producer Richard Rubinstein and director Tom Holland, the team behind the mini-series version of *The Longoliers*, have teamed for Stephen King's *Thinner*, which recently completed shooting in Maine with Robert John Burke and Joe Mantegna in starring roles. Paramount Pictures will distrib-

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ute the film sometime in 1996. The film is based on the King novel (written under the pseudonym Richard Bachman) about a man who experiences radical weight loss as the result of a gypsy curse.

Rob Morrow, whose star has been on a steady rise through TV's *Northern Exposure* and the feature *Quiz Show*, hit a sandbar on his way to *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Director Richard Stanley (*Hardware*, *Dust Devil*) left the project, to be replaced by veteran filmmaker John Frankenheimer. Frankenheimer's first priority was to make sure that stars Val Kilmer and Marlon Brando were both happy, and had several meetings with the stars, gathering notes for a script rewrite. Morrow, who was not consulted on the script changes, was not pleased with the results and left the project in an "amicable" split.

Amanda Plummer, an actress who has long deserved a starring role, finally comes into her own in *Freeway*. The story concerns a troubled gal who shoots, and nearly kills, a psychotherapist, earning herself a nice stay in prison. The twist is that she alone knows that the shrink is actually a psychopathic serial killer—unless, of course, she's crazy and is imagining it all.

Paramount Parks is building two major roller coasters themed to its Showtime *Outer Limits* series, with an estimated cost of \$10 million each. The coasters will be in the Paramount Parks at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Richmond, Virginia.



Dr. Who isn't dead... Plans for the new Dr. Who show are still alive at Fox even though series executives have been lukewarm on the show from the start. But Dr. Who is now the responsibility of Fox's telefilms division, where Trevor Walton, the exec in charge, is quite enthusiastic about the project; there's been talk of as many as six Dr. Who telefilms in the next year. There have been no official releases concerning casting, but the new Doctor will be based in San Francisco, and there is also a possibility that Sylvester McCoy, the seventh doctor, will appear to "pass the torch" in the opening scenes of the first film. (Above, Doctor number four, Tom Baker.)

Drew Barrymore will be quite busy over the next year, fulfilling various commitments established by her own production company, Flower Films. However, she is also committed to one outside project, *Scary Movie*, a horror film parody for Dimension Films. And

independent producer David Vincent is attempting to sign Drew to star opposite William Shatner in *The Road*, a low-budget film inspired by Federico Fellini's *La Strada*. "The idea is so crazy," says Vincent, "that I know it'll work." □

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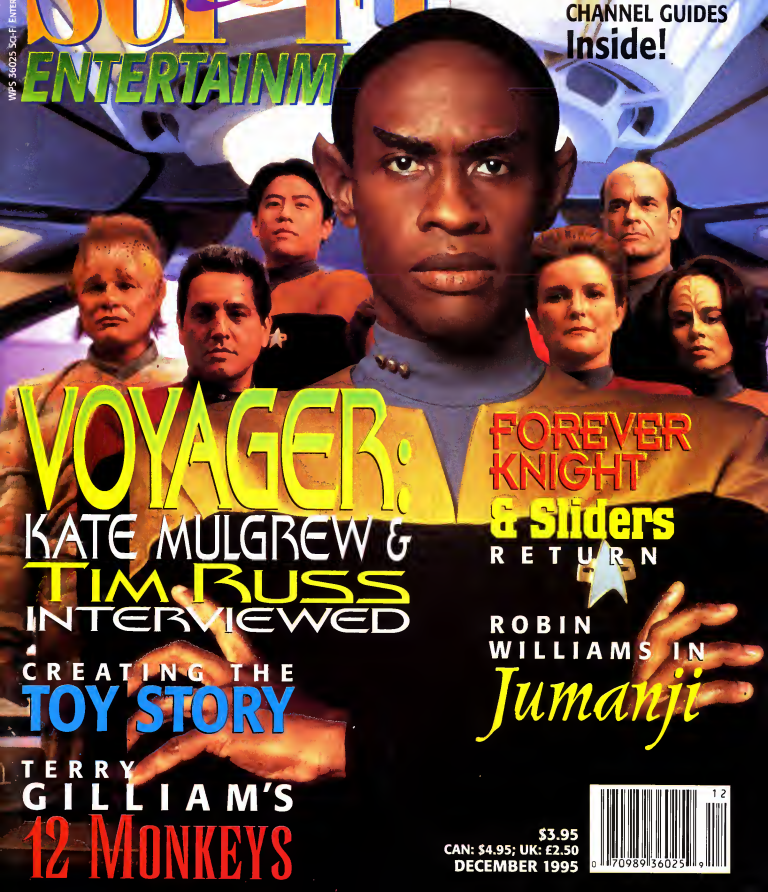
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12

Slip into an alternate universe with the you-are-there feel of 3-D.

BY MELISSA J. PERENSON & MARK C. SUMNER

ARE YOU READY TO ENTER THE THIRD DIMENSION? If not, you'd better be. Because before you know it, you, too, will be walking into a virtual world, and not just the lavish kind that you've seen at your favorite theme parks. The advent of ever-more mature virtual reality technology has already spawned the next generation of three-dimensional video games and interactive Internet sites on the World Wide Web. And

although many of these efforts are still in the formative stages, there's no doubt that virtual worlds are just around the corner. Lots of folks are even betting the house on it.

Perhaps the most surprising news is that the technol-

stand and are designed for you to rest your eyes against the binocular-shaped headset, contain two high-resolution, mirror-scanning LED displays which are miniature in scale, but appear to be full-sized when held close to the eye.

The 3-D images produced stem from the magic of illusion: Each eye focuses on a separate SLA display, which itself consists of 224 LEDs stretched into a thin column; when reflected in the vibrating mirror displays, rectangular, red-line images are created against a deep black background for startling clarity. Slight variations in the images help give them a visible 3-D feel. But keep in mind that this first incarnation of *Virtual Boy* is little more than the *Pong* of the 3-D gaming industry: the earliest, crudest manifestation of an idea that has the potential to grow into something much more.

As an aside, it's interesting to note that for all of *Virtual Boy*'s technological innovation, there already exist consumer-oriented virtual reality products on the PC side of the equation. Seattle-based Virtual i-O's *Virtual i-glasses*, which were mentioned in last issue's column, is the most prominent such device. Virtual i-O's virtual reality head-mounted glasses have been selling for \$799 in the retail channels. Using a head-tracking mechanism which, with the right software, allows your PC to respond to the movements of your head, the Virtual i-glasses enhance compatible games and software by adding a three-dimensional effect to existing full-color images. That's a far cry from what Nintendo's *Virtual Boy* is offering. Another key difference in Virtual i-O's favor is the growing adoption of its standard. Leading game and operating system vendors are incorporating Virtual i-O compatibility into their software; the list

includes Interplay Productions, Virgin, LucasArts Entertainment, Parallax Software, as well as integrated support by Microsoft's Windows 95 and IBM's OS/2 Warp Connect operating systems.

On the CD-ROM front, there are two technologies which are promoting the use of 3-D visuals. Apple's *QuickTime VR*, which was first showcased in last year's *Star Trek: The Interactive Technical Manual*, is one of them. *QuickTime VR* builds upon Apple's



Above, *MechWarrior 2* puts you right in the cockpit of a massive BattleTech. Below, *Virtual Boy*'s stereoscopic lenses trick your eyes with some magical illusions.

ogy is here today to accomplish what was once thought to be further in the future. The biggest trend seems to be toward using some form or other of virtual reality to give computerized renderings a you-are-there feel. But there are other approaches too, and all are bent are creating alternate universes for us to slip into at will.

Video game lovers will warm to Nintendo's *Virtual Boy*, a \$179.95 3-D portable game unit, the first 32-bit video game system that brings 3-D gaming into the home. The system uses light emitting diodes (LEDs) and a proprietary display technology from Reflection Technology called Scanned Linear Array (SLA). When viewing images through the stereoscopic lenses of *Virtual Boy*, these two technologies help trick your eyes into thinking they're actually seeing objects in three dimensions. The stereoscopic glasses, which come with a table



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successful QuickTime video platform to provide a means to display 360-degree panoramic, 3-D movie environments that are made by stitching together standard 35mm photographs, videos, and computerized renderings. You can really feel as though you're in the thick of the action, thanks to some generous maneuverability within those panoramas. You still feel the constraints of not having the flexibility of your "physical" walking legs, but as the Tech Manual showed us in vivid detail, QuickTime VR has serious possibilities, especially considering that Apple has developed a version for use on the World Wide Web.

Another approach stems from the increasing sophistication of multimedia authoring tools, which now are more capable than ever when it comes to rendering 3-D environments. As proof of this, look no further than CyberFlix's latest release, *Dust: A Tale of the Wired West*. What's of note here is the tremendous use of the technology that went into creating *Dust* (and not the fact that this is an adventure based in the Old West). CyberFlix developed *Dream Factory*, a proprietary multimedia authoring tool that, like Microsoft's *Scribble* (see below), deigns to put the creative control into the average writer's hands. As an interactive movie publisher, CyberFlix's approach from the start was to take a very Hollywood-esque slant on the production process of multimedia CD-ROMs. Accordingly, *Dream Factory* is designed to bring the CD-ROM development process more in line with that of Hollywood by using many of the same terminology and categorical concepts as the traditional studio lot, including "Central Casting" for the creation of characters and the "Prop Department" for the construction of props and sets. The end result is a fantastically engaging adventure that's marked by superb graphics which really put you in the driver's seat.

The simplest approach in the neighborhood is being taken by the much bally-hoed Microsoft Network (MSN), the freshman online service from Microsoft. MSN's "Scribbled Worlds" are planned as being primarily text-based, interactive, or "virtual," worlds where you can wander around, meet other people, and participate in activities. At first, then, these worlds will be a throwback to the text-based *Zork*-style adventure games of more than a decade ago (c'mon, admit it: you remember these games from your Atari 800 or Commodore 64 days of computing). But Microsoft has already mentioned such enhancements as images and sounds that would accompany the written descriptions of rooms and objects. Microsoft's efforts are noteworthy not so much for the modest-sounding concept as for the creative potential behind the concept. "Scribbled Worlds," if you were wondering, is derived from the fact that the worlds are created using a development tool from Microsoft called—surprise!—*Scribble*, referring to the common practice writers have of jotting, or scribbling,

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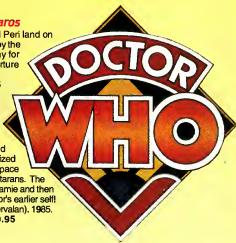
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their notes. *Scribble* is being targeted directly to the creative forces themselves—the authors and writers who don't know the first thing about programming, but do know a thing or two about crafting a story environment, a fictional world that would jump right out off the page at you, if you were reading the book. But instead, that page is now jumping out at you via your PC screen. By making that kind of power available to the creative camp, the possibilities down the road are, like the world of fiction writing itself, endless.

The notion of on-line virtual worlds is nothing new. There have been variants for years now, in the form of multi-user environments. The difference is that now these worlds are gaining a graphical face. CompuServe Information Services is working on *Worlds Away*, a two-dimensional, graphical chat environment where you can choose your own visual representation, characteristics, and "personality." Taking that idea one step further is *Worlds Chat*, a joint testbed venture of UB Networks and Worlds Inc. that has its home on the Internet at <http://www.worlds.net>. *Worlds Chat* is offering a three-dimensional chat environment that lets you wander about a simulated space station environment while interacting with other characters.

And then there's virtual reality's final frontier: the World Wide Web itself. VRML 1.0, which stands for Virtual Reality Modeling Language, is the open-standards-based platform derived from the Open Inventor file format from Silicon Graphics that's quickly developing into a force to be reckoned with on the Web. VRML is seen by some as being the underlying technology that will drive the next generation of computer user interfaces. "3-D really is the future," asserts Michael McCue, CEO of Paper Software, which makes the WebSpace and WebFX 3-D browser add-on. "VRML, today, is the beginning of something really, really big." Right now, there are about 150 3-D sites on the Web; over a third of these are running VRML.

The viewing of 3-D virtual worlds on the Web is dependent upon the browser you're using. WebFX (PC clones only—a Mac version is in the works), from Paper Software, is a \$50 add-in to the popular Web browser Netscape Navigator that enables Netscape to create and view virtual worlds and 3-D special effects on the Web. Based on VRML, WebFX seamlessly integrates itself within Netscape and other popular browsers. WebFX is the first VRML viewer to support Internet Relay Chat (IRC) rooms in 3-D space, so that you can see, interact and chat in real-time on the Internet. You can get

WebFX from <http://www.paperinc.com>.

VRealm from Integrated Data Systems is another VRML Web browser that runs as a standalone program or as a Netscape add-in. And then there's WebView, a browser from VREAM that interprets both VRML worlds as well as VREAM's proprietary VRCreator virtual-reality software. VRCreator's unique selling point is the linkage of user interactions with the virtual world.

Melissa J. Perenson

MechWarrior 2 from Activision brings a good game to home computers.

This is not the first time.

Giant walking war machines are everywhere. In books, in innumerable animated features, and in several highly successful boardgames, they stroll about blasting cities into rubble. These heavy metal engines of destruction are popular across all age groups and around the world.

FASA Corporation, the dominant player in



Missiles and lasers turn engines into scrap and armor into puddles.

things tall and metallic, has expanded their line of *BattleTech* games over the years to include both tactical and strategic warfare. Their world of fighting warrior clans has taken on a richness that equals—and often surpasses—that of more traditional dedicated role-playing systems.

From the very start, FASA's *BattleTech* world has seemed like a natural port for those smaller machines which grace the desktop. Activision has had a couple of goes at creating *BattleTech* games in the past. Others have also taken a shot at bringing home the battling 'bots. Titles like *Ultrabots*, *MechWarrior*, *Crescent Hawk's Revenge*, and half a dozen others that feature giant robot warriors, can now be snapped from the discount bin of your local software store. Several of these 'Mech games have been pretty good, but none have been really outstanding. Until now.

Look your sights on the nearest retailer and hit the jump jets. Activision's *MechWarrior 2* brings the world of *BattleTech* home with a force that blows all pretenders out of the arena.

Original plans called for the release of this game almost a year earlier. Demos were given. Screen shots were shown. Fans of the

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earlier games prepared for more of the same. But then Activision stopped the release and took the whole project back for a major redesign. Gamers who had been looking forward to the impending release fumed as the wait stretched out month after month. The ever-receding deadline became something of a joke even in the delay-plagued software industry. But in this case the wait was worth it.

Instead of an incremental improvement over the previous *MechWarrior* games, this is a true revolution. Graphics, sounds, and gameplay are all state of the art.

From the first moment of the full-motion video introduction—a mini-movie prepared by computer animation studio Digital Domain—you'll know that you're looking at a quality product. Of course, extravagant rendered movies are becoming a standard part of CD-based games. All too often the actual game is quite a let down from the slickness of the digital video. Fortunately, *MechWarrior 2* is one game where the beauty doesn't end when the real game play begins.

MechWarrior 2 puts you right in the cockpit of a massive *BattleTech*. The environment around you is generated using 3-D shaded polygons and texture mapping. Terrain can range from smooth plains, to rolling hills, to rugged canyons studded with pillars of stone. Smoke, fog, flames, rain, and darkness are all handled within the realistic environment. Weapons blaze. Enemy 'Mechs dissolve in gouts of fire and wreckage. Missiles arc across the landscape. Destruction rains as missiles and lasers turn engines into scrap and armor into puddles. It's beautiful.

Fans of FASA's games will be happy to find that a good percentage of the original has made the transition. The options provided for selecting your *BattleTech* weapons, and missions are enough to give a heavy metal buzz—or drive you *BattleTech* buggy if you're not familiar with the system.

You can choose to dive right in, grab the 'Mech of your dreams, and blast away against an enemy Mech in a one-on-one duel. Once you have the basics down, choose between two clans and plot a long career that will carry you through the ranks. This option is bolstered by a bit of storyline which welds the missions together. One suggestion: spend a little time behind the control of each 'Mech before you launch into the campaign. Even if you never end up driving some of these beasts, it's a good idea to know what they're capable of.

As you pass through the missions, more and more will be demanded from you and your 'Mech. You'll have to make good decisions in selecting your armament. You'll have to learn the rather tricky skill of turning the 'Mech's upper body in a different direction than the feet. The career option will present you with a series of missions, some of which you handle solo, but many of which involve your being part of a team. Learning to be a good team player, and especially how

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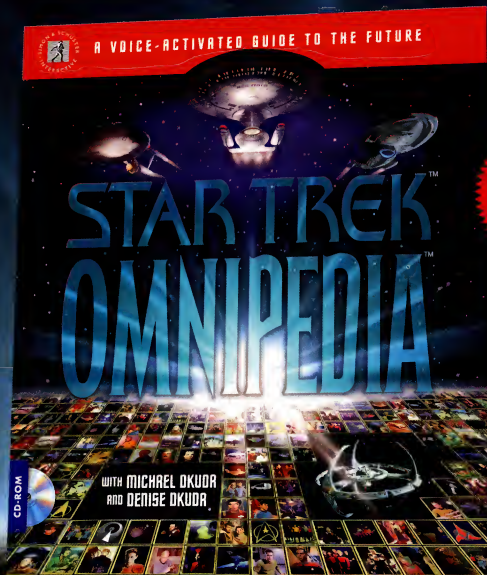
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to lead your side into a battle situation, can take some time but, like *MechWarrior 2* itself, the results are rewarding.

If you've ever had the chance to play at *BattleTech* Center in Chicago or one of the newer facilities, you'll find that Activision has done a fine job of bringing that intense, immersive experience home. As it now stands, you can't get the human camaraderie and rivalry provided at the center, but Activision will soon deliver a multiplayer version of *MechWarrior 2*. *NetMech* will allow two players to go at it over a modem, or as many as eight to hook up on a network. This looks to be the biggest time sink since *Doom* brought offices across America to their knees.

If you want top-of-the-line experience, couple *MechWarrior 2* with Virtual I/O's i-Glasses. This lightweight head-mounted display gives you a true 3-D stereoscopic view of the *BattleTech* world. With the head tracking on, you can look left and right while you walk. It makes those difficult over-the-shoulder shots much easier to pull off. A few more games like this might be enough to finally sell the public in home VR systems.

OK, time for the caveats. Hardware. You got to have hardware. Forget the puny '486, this game is a Pentium consumer of the first order. Eight megs of RAM, says the box. Except this time it means it wants all eight for itself. Not one test system would run this sucker without a more comfortable sixteen megabytes. Double-speed CD goes without saying. Don't forget the PCI video card.

For controlling these metal behemoths, you can resort to the keyboard, but you'll find a good joystick invaluable. For real control, try a set of rudder control pedals in addition to the stick. Then you can really make that 'Mech dance.

So, the hardware ticket on a machine to play this game costs only slightly less than a real 'Mech. Will that stop you? No! This is for the honor of the clan! Unlimber those gatling guns. Fire up the lasers. Let's go toast some enemy 'Mechs.

If you like *MechWarrior 2*, you might also consider: *MechWarrior 3050*. No, this isn't the big brother of *MechWarrior 2*—it's more like a small cousin. This game, also by Activision, runs on the Super Nintendo game platform. You don't get a first person perspective. You don't get your choice from dozens of 'Mechs. But you do get some slick animation and tons of semi-mindless shooting action. If you want *BattleTech* action without spending a fortune, this is the cheap way out. If you're a Sega Genesis owner, dig around the stores for the original *BattleTech* game. This one is very similar to the SNES *MechWarrior 3050*—only twice as hard.

There are a number of multiplayer robot games on the various dial-up services these days, but *CyberStrike* is still the champ. Simple to learn, furious in action, and smoothly responsive even on an older PC, *CyberStrike* is an easy game to love. □

Mark C. Sumner

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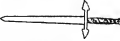
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Here's a guide for the video completist, and triumphant wings.

BY JEFFREY FRENTZEN AND EMRU TOWNSEND

AS A FAN OF SCIENCE FICTION, horror, and fantasy films, I have learned to accept that these genres are much maligned and misunderstood. Many respected critics view them as kid's stuff or camp; commercial film and video distributors often obscure their better qualities behind exploitative titles and garish promotional art.

And worse, movie producers and, more frequently, movie distributors have chopped,

censored, and destroyed films to make them "move faster," more salable, or to "protect" us from potentially disturbing or unpleasant subject matter. These practices range from TV stations cramming 90-minute films into 75-minute time slots, to distributors editing films for a

tained completely new music scores, and they were dreadful. Abel Ferrara's interesting widescreen reworking of *The Body Snatchers* was more or less ruined in the cropped video release, in which critical scenes that required the widescreen ratio for full effect were made unintelligible.

Last year I finally grew out of a life-long dependence on the hacks. After missing a midnight showing of Peter Jackson's horror-comedy *Dead Alive*, I caught the R-rated version on videocassette (a rental from Blockbuster, which is well-known for its attachment to "Family" entertainment). This toned-down implementation of the over-the-top gross-out lacked continuity and coherence. I tracked down an "unrated" cassette, and this one contained the several minutes of action missing from the other version and lived up to its reputation. Later, I caught word that a different and still more complete version of the film existed. I tracked it down and noticed that seven minutes of exposition had been cut from Jackson's original film, ostensibly to speed the pace.

Upon further investigation, I found a growing subculture of film purists who often go out of their way to obtain alternative versions of genre films, both popular and obscure. Some people simply want to reproduce the experience of watching *2001: A Space Odyssey* or *Forbidden Planet* in their original widescreen format. Others are bonafide collectors, who may be aware that domestic video releases may not be as complete as import versions and go to untold lengths to obtain the more hard-to-find iteration.

The movie companies are acutely aware of these folks, but do not pay them much mind except in the laserdisc market. Years ago, Hollywood, Sony, Philips Electronics, and other video-entertainment manufacturers attempted to appease these viewers with the laserdisc, which offers superior video and audio quality over videocassettes. Over time, laserdiscs and players have dropped in price and easily deliver the best quality home viewing for "home theater" mavens. Many laserdiscs offer special perks to movie aficionados, such as interviews with filmmakers, restored scenes, movie still galleries, and the now-requisite surround-sound audio. But what about those who don't want to blow \$7,000 on reproducing the ambiance of a movie palace in their rumpus room?

Alternate "letterboxed" video releases are becoming



Deadly aliens abound in the uncut video version of Tobe Hooper's 1986 remake, *Invaders From Mars*. Rare videos are available from a number of "specialty" video sources.

PG rating, to state's-rights-minded movie theater owners and other hacks clipping controversial material from 35mm release prints during a film's first run. Sometimes those clipped prints end up as source material for the video releases of our favorite films of the 1950s, '60s, and beyond. The bad video transfers of *Badlam*, *White Zombie*, and some of Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion epics quickly come to mind.

When it first became easy to waltz down to the video store and pick out a movie, I naively believed that "restored," "complete version," and "unrated" video box labels also meant "uncut." After all, videos are licensed for private viewing, and in that venue it's presumably safe to offer a complete, unexpurgated version of a film. No way. The hacks and puritans are still around, trying to sell you the same cut versions. And others always seem to find new ways of tampering with the originals.

For instance, during a recent binge of watching Vincent Price movies, I noticed the Orion video releases of *The Conqueror Worm* and *Scream and Scream Again* con-



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more common on videocassette. Some cable-TV stations, such as the Sci-Fi Channel and American Movie Classics, have begun to seek out transfers that allow this sort of presentation. Filmmakers use wide-screen ratios to enhance the drama and composition effects; however, the advantages of viewing the full frame may outweigh the fact that the overall picture area is smaller than normal. In many cases, movies that were originally presented on the big screen in CinemaScope, Techniscope, or some other wide-screen process are altered to fit a full screen for TV broadcast or videocassette distribution—on a TV, you see the middle two-thirds of the filmed image, but the sides are cropped.

The more conscientious distributors attempt to compensate for this significant image loss by using a technique called "pan and scan"—during the transfer from film to tape, the camera reading the filmed image is selectively shuttled across the widescreen panorama, following characters or action that moves outside the center of the frame. However, technicians in charge of a film-to-video transfer often fail to pan at the proper moment or, even worse, may not pan at all. Many "budget" video distributors routinely transfer widescreen films without the slightest attempt at pan-and-scan.

Some viewers recognize the value of watching the version of a movie containing the filmmaker's original vision and intent. Movie companies, which have finally grasped the fact that viewers want to see truly uncut prints, will now release a so-called director's cut of a popular film, which usually adds scenes cut from the theatrical release. For the science fiction, horror, or fantasy film, true "director's cuts" are seldom available, and genre fans must look elsewhere.

Case in point: After viewing the widescreen (and legitimately uncut) Magnum Entertainment video version of Dario Argento's *Suspria*, I saw the five minutes worth of footage removed from the U.S. theatrical release. The missing stuff added quite a bit to the film's out-of-control manner. After some research, I discovered nearly all of director Dario Argento's Italian productions have been butchered for American release, much in the way compatriot Mario Bava's fright flicks and the early Hammer Films productions were edited to remove violent scenes or "tighten up" meandering stories.

Finding reliable alternative video sources is difficult. Many genre magazines carry ads (usually very small) for businesses that sell video copies of imported laserdiscs and videocassettes, purporting to use only first-generation source material and "completely intact" versions of censored or lost movies. Some of these firms are from bootleggers selling illegal copies of licensed video versions. Others, some of which I have dealt with and describe below, are legitimate.

One of the best dealers, Facets Video, pioneered the alternative video-source concept. They can be reached at 1517 W. Fullerton Ave.,

Chicago, IL 60614, (800) 331-6197. Although they specialize in foreign classics, they also carry a number of cult and out-of-print genre titles. For the hard-core horror and sci-fi buff, check out Sinister Cinema, another veteran dealer that stocks a surprisingly eclectic mix of sci-fi, horror, sword-and-sandal, exploitation, and general weirdness. Their well-written catalog is immense, with titles such as *Horrors of Spider Island*, *First Spaceship on Venus*, a cache of some of Ed Wood's worst films, and others you can only see on TV on *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. Their forgotten gems include *Mania*, a superior retelling of the Burke and Hare crimes starring Peter Cushing and Donald Pleasance; good-quality prints of *The Man Who Lived Again*, *The Human Monster*, and other seldom-seen 1940s spook shows; the unreleased 1957 opus *The Dead Talk Back* and a widescreen transfer of the wild Asian sci-fi movie, *Inframan*. Sinister can be reached at P.O. Box 4369, Medford, OR 97501, (503) 773-6860.

In a different vein, Something Weird Video carries the largest inventory of exploitation titles I have ever seen, including some thought to be lost. Beyond that, Something Weird sells authorized versions of films by Jose Mojica Marins, known in the U.S. as the "Coffin Joe" series. These Brazilian-made horror movies will not be every fan's idea of entertainment, but Marins has produced two must-see essays in terror—*At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul* and *The Strange World of Coffin Joe*—that you will never see on the shelves at Blockbuster. Their 200-plus page catalog is informative and well illustrated. Write to P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133 for more information.

For the true genre connoisseur, I recommend getting your hands on film catalogs from Midnight Video and Video Search of Miami. The latter has single-handedly resurrected dozens of mostly foreign genre movies considered either unobtainable or lost. Their inventory spans thousands of movies, with some of them offered in alternate versions obtained from different countries. Examples include Richard Lester's postapocalyptic satire, *The Bed-Sitting Room*; uncut versions of Tobe Hooper's *Invaders From Mars* and John Frankenheimer's hard-to-find *Seconds*; a nearly complete set of Japanese science fiction films (mostly letterboxed and subtitled); and numerous Hong Kong, Italian, and other imports. They even sell several "art" films, including the original four-hour-plus version of Bernardo Bertolucci's *1900*. Their digest-size catalog, a dense list of movie titles with abbreviated descriptions, is not very informative, so you really need to know what you are looking for, and there is a dark side to dipping into their treasure trove. As their source material comes in from all over the world, some of the prints are good and some are really, really bad. Looking on the bright side, their two-day delivery service is consistent, and they offer subtitled prints of many foreign-lan-

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Space Force: The Wings of Honneamise has been competently translated, dubbed, and released on video by Manga Entertainment.

guage movies that previously had no English-language release. Video Search of Miami can be reached at P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116, (305) 279-9773.

If your concern is getting a video copy taken from a good print of a movie, Midnight Video prides itself on offering high-quality transfers and, for the most part, delivers. To a certain extent, their catalog duplicates that of Video Search of Miami, with an emphasis on foreign-made vampire and exploitation movies. They offer complete versions of the *Hellraiser* series; several Barbara Steele films; and an impressive array of Hammer Films, including the good but extremely hard-to-find *Vampire Circus*, *The Reptile*, and *Plague of the Zombies*. Their "Rare Films of the '50s and '60s" catalog includes *The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake*, Roger Corman's *Attack of the Crab Monsters*, and *The Beast with a Million Eyes*, once a ubiquitous "TV Creature Feature" that has since disappeared. Midnight Video's catalog is informative but hyperbolic in boasting of print quality compared to their limited competition. Most orders are delivered within a week. Midnight Video is located at 5010 Church Dr., Coplay, PA 18037, (610) 261-1756.

It's important to note that when these companies claim that their video versions are of "excellent" quality, they really mean pretty good; "mint" means very good-to-excellent; and "fair quality" means unwatchable except by a desperate fetishist. And if you are leery about rushing out and buying a title from these companies, why not rent it? Two mail-order rental firms specialize in genre movies, with some of their source material coming from places like Sinister Cinema, Midnight Video, and Video Search of Miami.

A pioneer in mail rentals, Video Vault carries an outstanding collection of sci-fi, horror, and fantasy films on tape, some of which are out-of-print and uncut. Their sci-fi catalog includes *The Day the Earth Caught Fire*, *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun*, Curtis Har-

ington's *Planet of Blood*, and the incredible *Yog, Monster from Space*—all tough to find anywhere these days. Video Vault can be reached at 323 S. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 549-8848.

Video Wasteland, a relative newcomer to the rent-by-mail trade, is fast becoming the place to obtain unusual and obscure horror and "trash" cinema. Where else can you rent a 140-minute version of *Dawn of the Dead*? Or a copy of Mickey "Mr. Universe" Hargitay in *Bloody Pit of Horror*? Ditto for the 1964 New Jersey-made monster movie *The Flesh Eaters*, the very obscure *Werewolves on Wheels*, as well as a near-complete list of movies from Herschell Gordon Lewis, Jess Franco, Lucio Fulci, "Coffin Joe," and other guilty pleasures. Video Wasteland is reached at (800) 532-1533.

While I'm at it, the out-of-print genre film is quickly turning into the fan collectible of the 1990s. In a recent catalog from Cinema Classics, a vendor specializing in selling out-of-prints, 1950s AIP movies like *Blood of Dracula* and *Teenage Frankenstein* are going for \$30. The original HBO Video release of *Circus of Horrors* costs \$60, and used copies of David Lynch's *Eraserhead* fetch \$105! Cinema Classic is at P.O. Box 174, Village Station, New York, NY 10014, (212) 675-6692.

Finally, cinephiles who want to keep up on the latest sources and information about unique and uncensored videos should check out *Video Watchdog*, published bimonthly at P.O. Box 5283, Cincinnati, OH 45206. Tim Lucas' journal is a well-documented rap sheet on all film and video distributors who put out inferior products, or attempt to fool us with incomplete "director's cuts" and "uncut" releases.

If your idea of science fiction anime doesn't go beyond women with big eyes, bigger bustlines, and still-bigger robots, *Royal Space Force: The Wings of Honneamise* (Manga Entertainment) will come as either a rude shock or a pleasant surprise. If only casually

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STAR TREK: VOYAGER

In a single, brief TV season, Kate Mulgrew made it impossible to imagine anyone else as Voyager's unsinkable starship captain.

The One and Only Katherine Janeway

BY DON E. PETERSON

THOUGH SHE WORKED HARD FOR THE PART—THROUGH SEVERAL auditions and considerable nervous waiting—Kate Mulgrew was not so much cast as *Star Trek: Voyager's* Captain Katherine Janeway as she was *thrust* into the part. Due to the abrupt departure of Genevieve Bujold in the show's first week of production, shooting was already in full swing when Mulgrew first laid eyes on a complete script.

"I was really shot out of a cannon," Mulgrew admits. "I was hired on Friday and started on a Monday. I'm glad I didn't have time to sit around and sweat blood about it. So I just really tried to apply myself to the material and the chemistry between the characters."





Despite the false start, and the sense of "emergency" that attended Mulgrew's entry to the world of *Star Trek*, few actors in the long history of Paramount's star-faring franchise have so quickly made a role so uniquely their own. Even down to the character's name (Bujold was playing "Elisabeth" Janeway), Mulgrew wears her on-screen role with such apparent comfort that it seems to have been tailor-made for her from the very start.

Mulgrew admits to finding Janeway a comfortable "fit," but she is just as quick to point out that this is not a comfort earned without sweat. For instance, as soon as she was cast, she realized her obligation to become fluent in the heavy *Trek* "tech-talk" that is a series trademark.

"I felt research was crucial, because who is going to buy the captain if the captain doesn't know more than everyone else?" says Mulgrew. "It's one thing to stand on the bridge and drop off the language, but to fully understand what I'm saying endows it with a deeper meaning. Besides, I am a student of human nature, so it's a terrific challenge to learn all the idiosyncrasies of

what something would mean. Janeway's science background has to be absolutely without question. So I decided to tackle the language; I used the *Star Trek Encyclopedia* and worked with anybody I could. I think it's very interesting for viewers to see she's in full command of what she's saying and she knows absolutely what is coming out of her mouth."

RESearching the *Trek* series, past and present, was also important for Mulgrew who remembers sitting down with a bunch of episodes shortly before she got the job, spending an entire weekend in "full immersion," initiating herself as a member of the *Trek* universe.

"William Shatner really appealed to me as a captain—I liked his style," she admits. "He was easy-going, but kind of a rugged American. *Next Generation* had an elegance to it which I thought was lovely. You could see the evolution of the writing on *Next Generation* and all the elements coming together. The first *Star Trek* was a bit primitive technically, but now we have

more graphics and opticals—you just can't believe what they have for these shows."

So deep background study played an important part in Mulgrew's creative process. But the play is the thing, to quote the Bard, and Mulgrew particularly stresses the importance of the *Trek* writing staff, and their sensitivity to the needs of the ensemble cast. "This is a marriage," says Mulgrew. "I'm interpreting Janeway, so they have to write her to suit my style, I suppose. But they've always been open and agreeable with me. I think Janeway should be very smart and strong-willed, but being a woman we should also explore her emotional depth—without ever jeopardizing her command style or authority. I'd like to see complexity in her interpersonal relationships. I'd like to see Janeway explored both as a woman and a commander."

Some fans have expressed the concern that Janeway's feelings are too close to the surface for a ship's captain, but Mulgrew disagrees. "I don't feel she's been too emotional. I think the writers are very vigilant about that and they have a right to be. We don't want an overly emotional captain.



the first season. In the second go-round, UPN has chosen a lineup with more edgy, fantasy-oriented shows on its schedule. And, while *Voyager's* ratings did not maintain the numbers of its two-hour premiere, the show has done well enough to make UPN look like a smashing success when compared to Warner Brothers' similar attempt to float a network.

Mulgrew feels that it's the fans that have brought the show to this level of success, and notes that the upcoming season will continue to build on the strengths of last season while also highlighting other characters now that Janeway has been firmly established.

Shooting for the new season had barely begun when we spoke, so Mulgrew had little light to shed on the future of her own character. "We don't get scripts in advance," she explained, "which can sometimes be a bit disconcerting."

"We just shot an episode entitled 'The Initiation,' which is basically Chakotay's story. He's imprisoned by the Kazon and learns a great deal about their ways. I was not that integral to that story and I think the next one we'll be shooting is all about Harry Kim going back in time. They're doing a lot of character development early on this season; I think they're going to ease up on Janeway since they concentrated a lot on her last season in order to introduce me as the first female captain. Now I feel they owe a couple of the other characters the spotlight for a while."

While she's yet to see the script for a second-season "Janeway episode," Mulgrew has a "wish list" for her character that the writers may well fulfill. "I would like to physically explore more of Janeway this year; I would like to be on more away missions if possible because that leads directly into personal confrontation. And then you could really see the emotional complexity of the character. I liked my dealings with the Kazon last season and I loved encountering the Vidians, which led to one of my best scenes in an episode called 'Phage.' They were organ stealing creatures, yet Janeway is always mindful of the fact that

Opposite, inset, Mulgrew was already a tough cookie when she appeared in the first (and only) Remo Williams film adventure. Opposite, Captain Janeway, flanked by First Officer Chakotay and Lieutenant Paris, confront "The Caretaker" about the Voyager's long detour. Below, The captain takes charge on the bridge.

these are people and she must address them and must respect them for exactly who they are. This even includes the Kazon who are a fierce group and have proved themselves to be our enemies time and again. She's in a real dilemma and she walks that thin line. She has to understand who she encounters for who they are and then resolve the problem in her own ethical way."

While Mulgrew has proved herself on the Paramount soundstages, she found her mettle tested once more when she appeared at her first *Trek* conventions. "I try to keep a low profile but the conventions are interesting and challenging—they're a total experience," she says. "They aren't something you can dance into and dance out of. I like them, but I don't think I could do a lot for them. I get asked a lot of wild questions, and when I'm asked hugely technical questions I just handle them very politely. They're smart fans—they're very smart. They have an eagle eye on everything."

A native of New York City, Mulgrew studied acting from the age of 17, when she first left home. She found herself cast on the daytime soap *Ryan's Hope* shortly thereafter and then two years later was approached to play Kate Columbo, the wife of Peter Falk's beloved trenchcoated detective, in her own short-lived spinoff series.

A film career beckoned shortly after, including work on the chiller *A Stranger Is Watching* opposite Rip Torn, directed by Sean Cunningham, the notorious creator of the *Friday* the 13th film series. She was also featured in the attempted film franchise *Remo*

Continued on page 72

That just won't fly. She has to be in utter command. We shouldn't sacrifice command style for humanity. We can have everything if it's done the right way. That's my hope and my intention."

While Mulgrew asserts Janeway's right to an emotional life, she is far more cautious with regard to the captain's love life. "I'm not into that love stuff," she says. "There was one episode where I was having a bit of a flirt with the leader of a planet, and that worked because it ultimately helped the *Voyager* get a little further home, but I think we have to be very careful where Janeway goes with her amorous inclinations. I have a lover on Earth and I feel that allegiance should be respected. If and when the time comes that she has to reveal herself more as a woman, then it should be done very carefully."

Following in the large footsteps of their Federation forbears has definitely been a challenge for all those involved with the new show. High expectations were placed on *Voyager* from the very beginning of the show, as the "flagship" in the United Paramount Network's little fleet of network programming, and it has proved to be the sole survivor of



Voyager's Tuvok seeks his own identity in the newest Trek incarnation.

BY TANYA ANN FLETCHER

BEING A PART OF *STAR TREK* IS LIKE getting on a train and going full blast," says Tim Russ, who plays Tuvok, the Vulcan Starfleet tactical/security officer. "You just jump on it, sit back, and watch all the things go by. Whenever you end up at a particular station there's something else there, like the marketing of products, or conventions. When you're done, you get back on and keep going."

"It's not like we had to work at getting this thing started and getting it to move. It already pretty much had its own momentum, and as an actor you're just caught up in the motion."

Considering the rocky waters *Voyager* experienced during its first season, it still managed to garner a much more favorable ratings response than its companion syndicated series, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Russ feels that the reason for the acceptance stems from *Voyager*'s close kinship to its granddaddy predecessor.

"I think our show is a throwback to the original series as far as the type of characters we have," says Russ. "We have a variety of cultures and races on the ship. Also, we're able to fly through uncharted space so, by virtue of circumstance, we're doing the same kind of things that they did on the original series. I feel we also have some of the same qualities of *Next Generation* in terms of the production value, dialogue, and style."

Briefly flying without a captain was one of the many bumps in the road *Voyager* faced out of the gate last year, when actress Genevieve Bujold bowed out as Captain Janeway after principal photography began



(quickly to be replaced by Kate Mulgrew).

"It was an absolute relief," recalls Russ about Bujold's departure. "I worked with Genevieve one day before she left, and it obviously was not going to work out. And she knew it wasn't going to work out. There was no fighting, squabbling, huffing, or puffing; it was just trying to make the scenes happen, and they weren't happening. She was trying to find this character and she wasn't coming around in time for us to do what we were trying to do. So when Kate came in during her first scene, she marched in, said her lines, and we were ready to go. It was definitely the captain on the bridge at that point. It was a major and welcome difference."

Finding his Vulcan character throughout the season was pretty easy according to Russ,

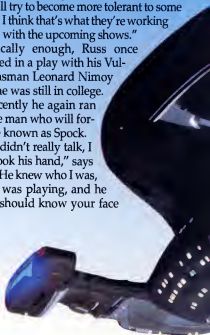
who notes that the Vulcan mythology had already been set up in the past, so his character exploration was in other areas.

"What I did was discover that this character, for example, had a family," says Russ. "He had a wife and children back in the Alpha Quadrant, which we'll be discovering coming up next season. We also will learn about how he has to adjust to the people he works around. I think he's going to have much more understanding about the ways of human beings and how they live and communicate, and he'll try to become more tolerant to some degree. I think that's what they're working toward with the upcoming shows."

Ironically enough, Russ once appeared in a play with his Vulcan kinsman Leonard Nimoy when he was still in college. Just recently he again ran into the man who will forever be known as Spock.

"We didn't really talk, I just shook his hand," says Russ. "He knew who I was, what I was playing, and he said 'I should know your face

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SPOCK



At right, after some foolhardy heroics, an injured crewmember gets the sober consideration of Tuvok and Janeway in the episode "State Of Flux."

really well. "I reminded him that we worked together in the play *Caligula*. So it's quite ironic, ending up in this position."

Of last season's 14 episodes, Russ' favorites were "Cathexis" and "Ex Post Facto," since they allowed Tuvok to show some range in an otherwise "emotionless" character.

"'Cathexis' afforded me the opportunity to play a character being possessed by an alien the entire time, and pretending to keep up a mask while trying to divert the blame to the other crew members," he notes. "It was a lot of fun to play, and there was some really interesting physical stuff that I did. I liked 'Ex Post Facto' because it was a chance for me to discover the investigative side to the Tuvok character and the way he works. Whenever you are in a project or a piece where you have a character arc from beginning to end, it is always a good thing."

One of the most positive aspects of the show for Russ is the large fan-base following it has, which he finds wonderful because it provides a constant source of feedback. "So far, the remarks and comments have been that I've fulfilled this Vulcan character pretty much to the highest degree," Russ says. "The believability is there that he is a Vulcan, so they're happy about that. However, the fans are much more



critical about the details and consistency of the show and what's been done in the past.

There are rules you have to follow that have been established by the previous series, so it's quite interesting how you have to make the whole process work."

As for Russ, he sees the show not only as a stepping stone for him as an actor, but also considers the possibility of someday stepping behind the camera, as fellow *Trek* actors Leonard Nimoy, William Shatner, LeVar Burton, and Jonathan Frakes have done.

"I don't know if that's going to happen, but it is in the back of my mind, and I may want to use the opportunity on *Star Trek* to expand my skills behind the camera," Russ notes. "It's a different type of work. Directing is more about being in charge of making images come together with some degree of imagination and, because of the show, it would have to be a certain way, no matter what you want to do. So I'd have to gear myself up for that challenge if I want to take it. It's a big challenge and it's a big step away from what I'm doing. You have to be objective in directing. It's an entirely different approach."

In the meantime, Russ plans to keep his Starfleet uniform on and continue exploring his character from the actor's perspective for a while. He's enjoying the recognition from fans now that he's part of *Star Trek*, and he's grateful that after all those years of paying dues, he's gotten to a point in his career that most actors only dream about.

"As a working actor you go from job to job, missing out on certain jobs, auditioning for things that don't come through, and not having work for a period of time. Now that I'm being recognized, I accept that as part of the job as well. People are watching the show on a regular basis. Being recognized to me is just part of the deal." □

teer—a film that many fans agree should have received more attention during its original release, and that has since found a broader audience through video, cable, and broadcast. Part of this delay has been Johnston's effort to find a script worth the effort to put on the screen.

"To be honest," he says, "I've read every script in Hollywood and most of them are crap." Even *Jumanji*, based on a very simply plotted children's book, wasn't fully in shape for the screen when Johnston first read it.

"They gave me a script that had been written by Chris Van Allsburg, who wrote the children's book it was based on. It wasn't something you could shoot a movie from. He had succeeded in adding a device to the story in which a kid is trapped inside the game for 26 years and comes out as Robin Williams. That, in itself, didn't make the screenplay, but that idea was the key in making the translation work. I told them I would do the project on the condition that we hire a real screenwriter. We interviewed several and ended up with Jonathan Hensleigh (writer of *Die Hard With a Vengeance*), who did the majority of the work on the screenplay." Hensleigh's task was to take a children's story and attempt to widen its appeal sufficiently to qualify *Jumanji* as a Christmastime "blockbuster."

The film's story opens in 1969, when young Alan Parrish (Adam Hann-Byrd) uncovers the *Jumanji* board game, buried in a lot in his hometown. On the box is encribed the legend: "A game for those who seek to find a way to leave their world behind." And Alan seems a prime candidate; too often, he winds up the neighborhood punching bag, and his parents are planning to send him to boarding school. No sooner does Alan roll the dice than giant bats appear from nowhere, and the 13-year-old disappears.

In 1995, two newly orphaned kids, Peter and Judy Shepherd (Bradley Pierce and Kirsten Dunst), arrive at what was once Alan Parrish's family home to live with their aunt. Both kids are still troubled by the loss of their parents, and it isn't long before they, too, hear the call of *Jumanji*. "The game gives you what you need," Johnston explains. "Anyone who hears the game calling to them is unhappy with some aspect of their life, or some relationship. They don't feel good about the way things are. Those are the people who hear the game calling to them."

But when Judy and Peter open the game, they are not immediately whisked away; instead, they unleash the jungle world of *Jumanji* into their new hometown, as if a zoo has exploded—lions, giraffes, and elephants, and the vanished boy Alan Parrish (Robin Williams), now grown into a 42-year-old

a LOT OF DIRECTORS believe that tougher shoots lead to more successful films; Joe Johnston's experience tends to support the theory. "*The Rocketeer* was like a lark," he says. "It was a long shoot, about 90 days, and it was logistically difficult, but I had a really great time doing it. I didn't have any serious production problems—and the film wasn't very successful. I think it made its money back, but it certainly didn't do what I'd hoped for it."

"In contrast, I had a terrible time on *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. Horrible time, grueling, life-threatening at times, shooting that picture down in Mexico City. *Jumanji* wasn't as difficult, but it was a challenging, difficult shoot—103 days in Vancouver, in the wintertime. It would get dark at four o'clock in the afternoon; you couldn't go on location and shoot a full day, because you just didn't have the light. We had rain and snow and bitter cold, and we were trying to photograph something that looks like New Hampshire in the summertime—not an easy thing to do. So I believe the more pain, the more gain."

Johnston's return to the director's chair is long overdue; it's four years since *The Rocketeer*.

A game box full of trouble is opened by Rocketeer director Joe Johnston.

The Call Of.. *Jumanji*

BY BERTHE ROEGGER



man. "He comes out as a total jungle survivor," says Johnston. "His clothes have disintegrated; he's had to dress himself in animal skins and leaves, and he wears a turtle shell helmet. The only thing he has left is a watch and a pocketknife and some change."

One would think that the copious digital effects of *Jumanji* (all the animals are computer-generated images) would be right up the alley of Johnston, whose career started at Lucasfilm and who, as recently as 1989, designed the aerial effects sequences for Spielberg's *Always*. But Johnston denies any special knowledge of effects.

"I was a designer when I worked for George Lucas on the three *Star Wars* films—a designer and storyboard artist. I picked up enough knowledge about effects to

know the difference between a blue screen and a garbage mat, but I'm not an effects technician."

Johnston's first love was art. "As far back as I can remember, I was an artist—I was born in Austin, Texas, and I remember drawing before I could even walk. I was always on the floor. And my father was an artist, still is an artist. I remember him teaching me about perspective in the third grade."

Johnston initially joined Lucasfilm practically by accident. "I didn't get into the business until 1975, which now seems like a long time ago. I had gone to school as a product designer, graphic designer, illustrator, and was actually working as an industrial designer, working in Malibu, making \$300 a

week. And living in Long Beach, so I was driving an hour-and-a-half to work. I got a call from my department chairman at Cal State, where I'd gone to school, and he says 'hey, they're hiring on some space movie in the Valley.' So I got my map and I realized that I'd only have to commute an hour to work instead of an hour-and-a-half. The pay was the same, \$300 a week, so I said 'hey, this is great—I have a whole extra hour a day to get stuff done!'

"It was really a great experience. John Dykstra had assembled a group of people who were not filmmakers—they came from all different disciplines: machinists, model builders, artists. A few of them had film



With one eye out for giant spiders, Sarah (Bonnie Hunt) attempts to save her long-lost childhood friend Alan (Robin Williams) from being swallowed by an attic floor.

SCI-FI CHANNEL ENTERTAINMENT



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Peter (Bradley Pierce, far left), Judy (Kirsten Dunst), Sarah, and Alan must face the game Jumanji one more time in an effort to save their homes and loved ones.

experience, as John did. But a lot of us were right out of school or right out of other jobs and were experimenting, and that's why it was so much fun—it wasn't like anything else—there were problems presented, and we figured out how to do them in ways that a film person normally might not. It was really a great experience. All three *Star Wars* films were a lot of fun."

Jumanji's extensive effects did exploit Johnston's acknowledged design talents. "We did a lot of design work before we ever got ILM involved, a lot of artwork in Los Angeles, where we did pre-production. Then we got ILM involved, and they took the two-dimensional art and turned it into three-dimensional art—sculpted the animals and did computer models of them, and took it to the next level. And once you signed off on it, saying 'yeah, this is the look of the elephant or the rhino or whatever,' then they'd take it and start experimenting with animation, how it's going to move and walk. It's really a different process than it was ten years ago, or even five years ago. Everything's different. *Jurassic Park* changed everything."

Even the once arduous work of matching actors to floor effects, to visual effects—once laboriously achieved by those such as Ray Harryhausen—has become simplified by new techniques. "The great thing about CGI is that you can shoot the actors running through the set—and all you need to do is then photograph the result of the effect. It makes it a lot simpler than having some big mechanical thing chasing some people through the house. You leave yourself a lot of flexibility. You don't have to photograph the actors on the same path as you do the destruction, so there's no danger of anybody getting hit by flying wood or glass. You run them through—you take the camera back and you photograph the demolition—and ILM somehow syncs it all together. It's really incredible the things they can do these days without blue screen, just by computerized mattes and separating the actors from the

background digitally. I don't understand it, but I know it's amazing."

To aid the actors, "we did some very crude computer storyboards that showed the actors what was going to be breaking through the wall and what was going to be chasing down the hallway and stomping on cars and things like that. It wasn't enough to really make it absolutely clear to anyone—but that, in combination with storyboards and with a lot of effect rehearsals, and explaining that this section of the wall is going to implode and this door is going to fly across the room and hit this picture frame...it was extremely complicated stuff involving timings that were split second."

"Actors are always being asked, 'What's it like reacting to something that's not there?' But that's why they're actors. It's acting, you know?"

SPEAKING OF ACTORS, this is said to be one film where Robin Williams plays a character who, for once, is not the frenetically convivial "Robin Williams" character. "We had a lot of discussion before he agreed to take this movie, and he insisted that almost everything be on the page," says Johnston. "He was very conscious of wanting a fairly exact blueprint of who this character was. He had a lot of input for his character, giving different readings, and he did a lot of experimentation within parameters. But one problem with a film like this is that the effects are such a restricting influence; there are some scenes where the effects are driving the scene, you have to do what the effects dictate, in some cases. We were holding ourselves to a fairly tight budget—a big budget, but a tight budget because we had a certain number of shots that were budgeted and we couldn't just go wild and say 'we'll make it up later. Robin was very conscious of that, as all the actors were, and

they worked from the confines of what we had planned in pre-production."

Johnston had no problem working with a largely juvenile cast. "The kids were great," he declares. "I've worked with kids before, and I always have a really great time; working with kids is a lot of fun. It's like they're there to have fun. It's refreshing."

Johnston welcomed the kids' input on their roles, as well. "I don't believe in over-directing anyway," he says. "What seems to work for me is to agree with the actor on the character they're playing and let that character do what they feel they should do. If it's not right then we guide it in the right direction. I think you get the best performance when you tell somebody here's what I want you to do, but it's up to you how your character does it. But again, within the limitations that the effects would allow us."

It's no surprise that Johnston shares our own fondness for *The Rocketeer*, a film that was a throwback to an older sort of entertainment, much like last year's similarly neglected film *The Shadow*. It's our own conviction that, in a better world, both films would not only have been hits, but would have spawned sequels as well. "There was a whole controversy about the star," recalls Johnston, "and I didn't want a well-known star in the lead. Had we found the right one, who would do it the way we all wanted it, I would have said 'great.' But we had a hard time casting that picture. We eventually cast Bill Campbell, because he was almost the comic book stereotype hero of the '30s in appearance. I thought he did a great job. But it didn't have a single big box-office star. And that may have been part of what contributed to its lack of success. But I have very good memories of it—I'm sort of a fan of the '30s anyway. I liked being able to play with all those cars and airplanes—it was really a kick to be able to assemble a fleet of vintage aircraft like that and actually have them flown in front of the cameras, like the biggest box of toys in the world."

Johnston hopes to be behind the cameras again before too long, and to that end is developing a screenplay based on the 1975 novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, about a band of lovable "eco-terrorists." "We have a writer working on it right now, Derek Washburn, who wrote *The Deerhunter*, a really great writer. This property has been optioned seven or eight times over the years—a lot of studios, a lot of directors and producers have tried to get this movie made over the years...no one has ever been successful. So I'm knocking on wood right now. But I think we have a sufficiently different take on the movie and I hope we'll be successful." □

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LIFE AFTER DEATH

Forever Knight rises again.

THE BANE AND BLESSING OF THE VAMPIRE IS THAT HE (OR SHE) never dies. Where there's starvation and death, the vampire thrives. The same might be said of *Forever Knight*, a unique show about a vampire trying to atone for 300 years of killing by working as a cop on the steamy streets of modern-day Toronto. Originally part of CBS's "Crime Time After Prime Time" lineup, the show has ostensibly died and been reborn not once but twice in the dicey, cutthroat world of nighttime TV programming.

Given new life in an unprecedented arrangement between Columbia TriStar Television and USA Network, twenty-two new episodes of the cult hit will be telecast on the weekends in national first-run syndication and on a weekday evening in prime time on USA. But there is a price: With the first episode of the new season, the show is losing three cast members and introducing three new characters.

"After doing forty-eight shows with the same group of people, except for one change, you become very, very close with that group of people and it becomes like an old sweater," says Geraint Wyn Davies, who stars as *FK*'s romantic hero Nick Knight. "It feels really good when you put it on. There's nothing wrong with buying a new sweater, but it just takes some getting used to."

Leaving are *FK* veterans John Kapelos, who played Nick Knight's droll, down-to-earth partner Schanke; and Deborah Duchene, who played Janette, Nick's vampire lover and friend who formed a close triangle

with Nick and his nemesis, LaCroix (Nigel Bennett), the vampire responsible for "bringing him across" in the 13th century. Also leaving is Natsuko Ohama, who replaced the first season's Stonetree (Gary Farmer) as precinct captain.

"The changes are not necessarily bad for us, but I think all of us will have to get used to them," explains Wyn Davies. "The captain of the Toronto police force seems to be the most expendable position. It's a front liner—you get to be the police captain and you're only there for a year. But John and Deb were with the show from the beginning, and there was personal investment."

James Parriott, the co-creator and executive producer who, along with Jon Slan and



BY LISA MACCARILLO



Richard Borchiver, has been a driving force behind the show's success since the first season, describes the cast changes as "purely practical. John Kapelos had an option to leave the show this season and elected to take it; Natsuko, same thing; and we had trouble closing our deal with Deborah Duchene. We were unable to afford to pay her for every day that we had contracted her to be in the show, so we asked her if she would be in fewer shows for us and have a more significant role in those fewer shows and she declined, a very painful loss. Kapelos, too, was a huge contribution to the show, and I'm going to miss him dearly. But sometimes these things fall that way."

Fans of John Kapelos can look for him on

the Showtime TV movie *Cool and the Crazy*, as well as a future comedy project. "John wants to broaden his career and develop comedies with him as the star or co-star, for which there is interest of his own and with the networks," says Parriott. "I think he wanted to do that instead of spending another nine months in the darkness up in Toronto. Schanke was a great character to write for, and John was a great guy to have on the set. Everybody's going to miss him a lot."

"The show will be quite different this year," adds Nigel Bennett, who stars as LaCroix, the sage, seductive and shameless vampire. "That might be a good thing. We're back in unknown territory—it's like the first year all over again. But it's a shame to lose

Opposite, Blu Mankuma as the new precinct captain. Above, some things never change—LaCroix (Nigel Bennett) and Nick Knight (Geraint Wyn Davies) at each others' throats.

them. They were all very talented actors and a joy to work with."

Deborah Duchene will be returning to her first love, the stage. "She has been offered some really exciting work on the stage and she was very happy to be able to accept it," says Bennett. "It will be strange without her, and who will run the Raven? Is LaCroix going to be running the Raven? I have no idea."

"USA is a light voice in this," says Parriott.



Nigel Bennett, who has previously written and directed for the stage, will direct at least one show this season; he is also working on a script for a future show.

"They helped push us into saying, 'Hey, can we have a few younger characters, and can we expand the vampire world a little bit?'"

Bennett applauds the new direction. "We have a front story and a back story in every episode," he says. "The front story has always been the cop story, with the back story being the vampire story. It would be nice if occasionally in the third year the vampire story was the front story."

After coming to terms with the loss of half of FK's cast, Parriott and the other producers faced the challenge of conceiving a new partner for Nick, and they came up with a young rookie named Tracy Vetter, who is played by Lisa Ryder. "Tracy gives a different balance for Nick to play off," says Wyn Davies. "She's newer, sexier; she needs more help from Nick."

"When USA picked us up, they wanted the show to have a little more of an edge and for us to expand the vampire world a little bit," Parriott adds. "So now we've made

Nick's partner a woman—a young woman who is headstrong and sort of anal retentive, and yet who has fantasies. She dreams of being the woman in *Last of the Mohicans*."

Parriott insists that for the moment Nick's relationship with his new partner will not be a romantic one ("It's more of a mentor kind of relationship," he says), and while romantic tension will continue between Nick and Natalie, fans shouldn't expect to see them in a full-blown affair. "I think it can't get too settled," Wyn Davies says. "It's got to change a little. It can't be buddy-buddy, it can't be two trains passing in the night, it can't just be frustrated lovers—it has to be all those things. Cath's character is the audience, in a way. She is the closest element to Nick who shares his secret. There's really nobody else, except for LaCroix, and there's always an enormous power struggle with him. Nat is his confidante, a good listener, his support—she's everything."

Tracy has her own love interest, in the form of a young vampire named Vachon, played by Ben Bass. "Ben is a young actor whom I introduced Jim to by taking him to Stratford last season," Wyn Davies remembers. "He was playing Christian in *Cyrano DeBergenc*. Ben is going to bring a really good, dark, brooding element to the piece."

Adds Parriott: "Vachon is the answer to Tracy's fantasies, a very dangerous answer. She knows he's a vampire, but she doesn't know that Nick's a vampire. She doesn't even know that Nick knows that vampires exist. She has no idea of what Nick is. It's a fun dynamic we're playing around with."

The character of Vachon also introduced a new world of vampires to FK's audience. "Vachon's friends are like the Lost Boys," Parriott continues. "They give us a different historical perspective in flashbacks—not that we're going to eliminate Geraint's flashbacks—but it's a broader canvas."

Vachon's presence also adds a new twist to the spiritual standoff between Nick and LaCroix. "It would be an interesting triangle," Wyn Davies muses, "between Vachon, LaCroix, and Nick. I shouldn't give away too much, but Vachon has to struggle between the essentially good vampire and the essentially evil vampire and where his future might lead him. He has to take the place of Janette in terms of being Nick's liaison to the vampire world."

The combination of Nick's new partner, Tracy, and his old adversary, LaCroix, also promises explosive results. "I see LaCroix encroaching more and more and more on Nick's normal life as he tries to get him back," Bennett says. "We had interaction between Schanck and myself at the end of the last season. I think it's inevitable that he interact with Tracy."

The third new cast member is the new precinct captain, to be played by Blu Mankuma, a veteran of such TV series as *Robocop*, *M.A.N.T.I.S.*, *The X-Files*, and *Street Justice*, among others. "Blu's wonderful," says Wyn Davies. "He's got a warmth and a sense of irony that I think will be wonderful for the role."

Davies, who last season directed two episodes of FK, directed the first two episodes and will also direct the last, with possible others in between. "I have more energy when I'm directing," he says. "It's energizing, not enervating. You're constantly active. One of the most difficult things for me during production is to be standing and viewing from the sidelines. I prefer to be in there mucking it up. I can't remain idle for too long, and indeed I can't go without talking for too long. So, it's much easier for me to direct and act at the same time."

Bennett, who has directed for the stage, but not yet for the cameras, may also take the directing reins this season. "I finished a script for the show," he says. "Whether it'll be used or not, I have no idea. Writing and directing are areas that I really want to get into. I've been promised that I'll be able to direct at least one this season, and if it's good then it will be two. So, I'm looking forward to that. That's going to be scary."

Parriott indicates few changes in the established characters this season. "We try not to go for any really big character changes," he says. "Will Nick go through the moral

NEW TO THE FORCE:

Lisa Ryder plays the vampire detective's by-the-book partner.



CONSIDERING THAT MANY *Forever Knight* fans still sting from the departures of Deborah Duchene, Natsuko Ohama, and, most especially, John Kapelos from the show, Lisa Ryder, who plays Nick Knight's new partner Tracy Vetter, found fitting into the cast was "surprisingly easy. At first, I tried to get to the writers and producers to ask about how they wanted me to fit in, but they really had no advice for me! What made it especially smooth, though, was that Geraint directed the first couple of episodes, and he brought me, and the other new cast members, up to speed on what was going on, and who everybody was, and so on.

"The fact that there were other new characters helped, too—it wasn't like walking into something that was totally established. At the same time, all the hard work of establishing a show is done—the shooting schedule's under control, and there aren't all the publicity obligations of a new show—all that hyperactivity is over with, so it was pretty easy. And I was immediately made to feel pretty much at home.

"There are those moments when it's apparent that there was another cast. There are a lot of John Kapelos jokes, and 'Remember when Deborah Duchene did such and such,' those slightly odd moments—but it's like working with people who had previously worked together on a different show.

"I understand why those people are missed, though—you know, when you're with people for twelve hours a day, it becomes like a family. But Geraint takes it as his responsibility to see that we have a good working environment; he takes it upon himself to see that everyone has a good time."

According to Ryder, it's Geraint Wyn Davies who sets the emotional tone for the set. "Geraint has a very strong personality; when he's hyper and happy, the whole set fills with that mood. When he's not, he pretty much keeps that to himself. Sets often take

dilemma of being a vampire and try to rectify that? Yeah. That conflict will exist, and we'll continue to struggle with that. But I don't think you're going to see him suddenly saying, 'OK, I'm going to settle down and marry Natalie.' That's not going to happen."

Last season's episode "The Fix," in which Natalie gives Nick a drug which allows him to feel mortal for a short while, went Wyn Davies' appetite for lighter, more fun times in

on their character from the lead. If the lead is an unhappy person, that's an unhappy set. When the lead wants to make it work, as Geraint does, it's great."

Ryder had previously appeared in the series (as Angela Mosler in the episode "Beyond the Law"), so she was familiar with the show and its cast when she was asked to try for the role. Ryder has been acting professionally, mostly in theatrical productions, since her graduation from the University of Toronto in 1993. She grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, with a solid Mennonite upbringing. "I was a little performer," she recalls, "in dance classes from age four."

The task set out for *Forever Knight* this season is to retain its many loyal fans while reaching out to a wider audience, and the new cast is part of that strategy. "They are taking a younger and sexier angle, perhaps—more 'Gen X' type vampires, sort of like *Lost Boys*...and *Pulp Fiction* has been mentioned a few times as a model, but not in such a way that it would seem to imitate *Pulp Fiction*. They have me in a not very sexy role, though, playing an anal retentive rookie."

Ryder identifies most closely with Tracy

Vetter's "rookie" aspect, she says. "I'm relatively new to television, and Tracy, though she's been in uniform for a few years, is new to the detective thing. And her being a woman in a man's world is also true of the set, I guess."

And what about Tracy is different? "I'd like to say the anal retentiveness, but I'm not sure that's true," she laughs. "I'd say the fact that she's a danger-seeking type—she'll go anywhere with her gun."

Ryder says that the nature of her relationship with Nick is "not really altogether clear in the writing, as yet...we're expecting that to evolve. But right now it seems to be a big brother/little sister relationship, with Nick showing her the ropes. There seems to be a pretty firm line that nothing romantic will happen between us, though, because of Nick's involvement with Natalie. But they are experimenting a little—every show seems to be a bit different."

Nick's new partner remains in the dark about his nocturnal habits. "I know about vampires, but not about Nick. So there's some nudge-nudge going on between Nick and Natalie like I'm supposed to be unaware of."

Ryder remains a bit uncertain about what to expect from *Forever Knight's* fans, though the fan experience is not completely unknown to her—she remains good friends with former fiancé Ty Templeton, himself a rising star at DC Comics where he's been doing pencils and scripting chores for *Batman* and *Robin Adventures*. "I'll have to ask him about all that fan stuff," she says.

Ryder's first convention invitations have arrived, and she remains uncertain how to respond, "because they invite you for the whole weekend...I had my first interview with a fan club today—my first experience with fandom. I just don't know how to answer those questions about my favorite color, or what book I'd take to a desert island. I never have the witty reply handy."

—Ed Flixman

the *FK* universe. "I think the sense of irony and whimsy hasn't been explored enough," he reflects. "After 800 years, yes, you've seen all the negative and everything else, but you've also seen huge leaps in civility and mankind. It would be interesting to see positive parallels, as opposed to death and destruction. That would be a wonderful thing that Nick could share with Natalie or someone—a huge reaffirmation of mankind.

I like the idea of Nick representing that; yes, the first 800 years have been a tough road, but he's doing everything he can—and failing—to atone for that. It doesn't negate the 800 years, but God knows there had to be positive elements too. I think there were times in the past where LaCroix and Nick and Janette enjoyed going around and chomping on people. I love the idea that it must have been a gas at some point!" □

Terry Gilliam, director of *Time Bandits* and *Brazil*, continues to explore big themes with his newest film, *Twelve Monkeys*.

“what reality is... what it isn't... and what dreams are...”

BY DON E. PETERSON

Outside the realm of film scholarship, *The Jetty* is an obscurity, a 28-minute short that tells its time-travel story through a series of still photographs, each representing a frozen moment of time. Attentively viewed, the 1962 French film packs a strong emotional punch; but, since its manner of storytelling is “difficult,” the film has seldom been seen in this country, outside of university film programs, and a few screenings on the PBS network several years ago.

It was *The Jetty* that inspired David Webb Peoples [screenwriter of *Blade Runner*] and his wife Janet to pen the screenplay of *Twelve Monkeys*, the newest film from director and former Monty Python troupe member Terry Gilliam. Gilliam, despite a sterling record of critical success, and a mass cult following among SF fans and the university crowd, has a reputation in some Hollywood circles as a brilliant, but “difficult” talent—this largely stemming from his failure to remain silent when his films *Brazil* and *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* were undermined by the studios that financed them with late and inadequate distribution.

But talent is too rare to be ignored, and *Twelve Monkeys* brings Gilliam back to the studio that he once fought in a months-long battle to see *Brazil* released. In this instance, Universal is again faced with an uncompromising, idiosyncratic, and difficult-to-market film, but its modest budget (\$30 million) and its obvious star power (Bruce Willis and Brad Pitt) virtually guarantee that Gilliam has delivered a moneymaker, even if it never tops the chart of top-grossing films.

The plot of *Twelve Monkeys* concerns Cole (Bruce Willis), a time traveler from a devastated future Earth. A convicted criminal in his own time,

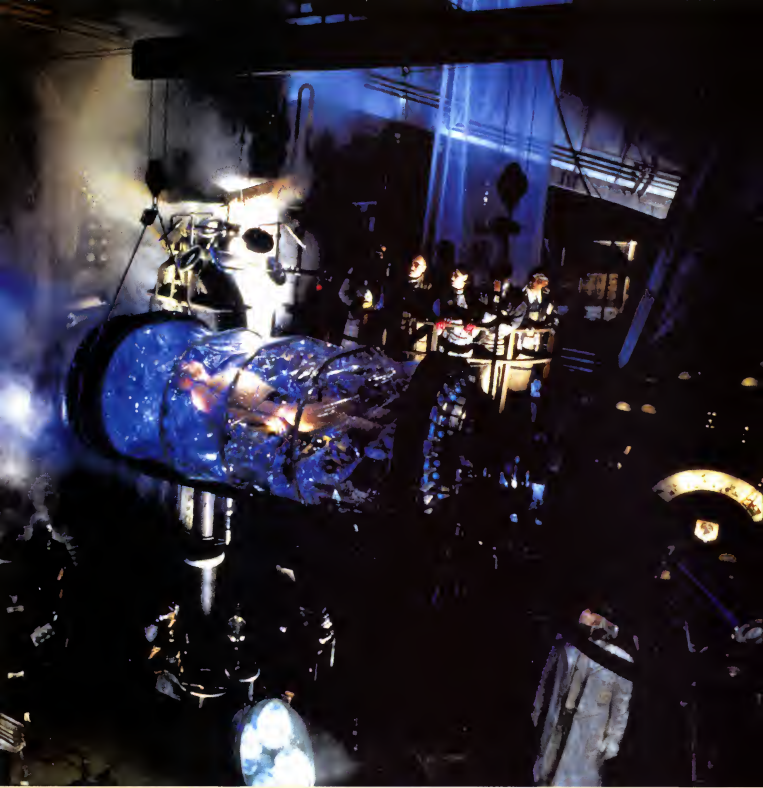
Time travel isn't easy for Cole (Bruce Willis), seen here at the start of his journey and (inset) in the care of Dr. Kathryn Railly (Madeleine Stowe).



Cole has been selected for this journey because of a single, deeply rooted traumatic memory, which the scientists of his time believe may allow his memories of the future to survive the amnesia-inducing experience of travel to the past.

On his arrival in 1996, Cole is clearly unbalanced by the rigors of his trip, and is placed in the care of Dr. Kathryn Railly (Madeleine Stowe). As their relationship develops, Dr. Railly becomes increasingly convinced that Cole is not a conventional lunatic. With his doctor's help, Cole sets about unlocking a series of secrets—the secret of “the tribe of the Twelve Monkeys,” the secret of the hazardous experiments of Dr. Goines (Christopher Plummer, with Brad Pitt as his son), and, most importantly, the secrets locked within his own mind.

SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT: You've said you haven't made as many films as you'd like...



TERRY GILLIAM: It's been three or four years per film. After *The Fisher King*, I was desperate to do another one quickly, but four years passed before I got behind the camera again. It's strange.

SFE: Why does it take so long?

GILLIAM: A long time ago we would do a Python film and then we would do one of mine, so there was always that gap in between, and because I was writing them myself and trying to get the money together, it took a long time. There was a period after *Baron Munchausen* where I couldn't get arrested—I couldn't get anything going. Then *The Fisher King* came along. That was a joy and a breeze. Because it was successful, and successful within Hollywood as opposed to an outside-Hollywood independent production, I was suddenly offered all these different things. So I was running after this project and that one, project after project. There was *Tale of Two Cities*,

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. There was one I wrote with Richard LaGravenese called *The Defective Detective*. All these projects...we were running around chasing money or talent, and none got made. Finally, I was going crazy—it has suddenly become four years. Then the *Twelve Monkeys* script came along. I liked it, so I said let's go.

SFE: Isn't it ironic that you started as an animator for Monty Python, making static images move—now you're directing a movie inspired by a film that was told with still images?

GILLIAM: It's coincidence. I've actually never seen *La Jetée*. I've seen the book on it, a book of stills which I assume is close to the movie, but I've never seen the movie itself. Actually...I never thought about the connection with *La Jetée*, but that is how I began—doing still movies.



Above, Cole is grilled by a panel of mental health professionals upon his arrival in 1996; Opposite, Cole wears protective gear for a fact-finding sojourn into the deadly streets of Philadelphia in the year 2035.

It was in 1962 when I was working at *Help!* Magazine, which was started by Harvey Kurtzman, who began *Mad*. I went to New York after I graduated, and met Harvey. They were looking for an assistant editor, so Harvey and I did this magazine for three years. One thing we did was *funetti*, which were comic strips, only with live-action shoots. Like *La Jetée*—it's stills, making a movie with stills, except people spoke with balloons like they do in comic books. We'd go out and shoot them.

But I seem to be surrounded by ironies all the time—making the movie at Universal, which is the studio that tried to bury *Brazil*, and with Chuck Rovin as producer, whose wife is Dawn Steel, who was the head of Columbia when I did *Munchausen*. It doesn't matter how many bridges you burn in Hollywood, you can't seem to escape from it all. Things just keep happening. Either you go crazy about it or you start laughing because it's so ironic.

SFE: Were you able to shape the Twelve Monkeys script?

GILLIAM: A lot of people look at it and say it's a Gilliam film; I just tried to do the script. It's a way of processing, having written stuff in the past and being very respectful of writers' work—I don't want to take over something because somebody has worked on this for a year or longer. There are things I've pushed into it, and taken things out and all those things, but in conjunction with the writers.

I didn't change the story, I just changed details. There's a specific moment when Bruce's character comes back from this place; originally he was always punished every time he came back, so this time I thought it would be more interesting if he *wasn't* punished, but he was rewarded for having done well. So we ended up with a very silly scene where these serious scientists in this possible future are singing "Blueberry Hill." That's something where I was putting something in. I was still shooting it and obviously changing things all the time and altering the emphasis of certain things. I feel it's important to stay true to what's written. I don't want to impose

myself on it too much, but unfortunately we're unable to stop. Everything I do is so organic and collaborative, I find it hard to know what I've done and haven't done.

SFE: I assumed this was going to be a big holiday release—but they're actually platforming it as a specialty film and then opening it wide. Why? Is the film that off-beat?

GILLIAM: It's a very complex, intelligent film, and it has so many different elements in it. We were looking at the trailer this morning. There are elements in it that look like a sci-fi film and there are elements that look otherwise. It's very hard to pick out what the film is, very easy to give people the wrong impression.

It's very hard to describe it, except that it's dealing with what I'm always dealing with: the interplay between fantasy and reality. We have a case of a man who may have come back from the future to try to find a virus that wipes out the bulk of humanity in 1996—or is he just one more apocalyptic lunatic? That's what intrigues me.

The film has been described as a jigsaw puzzle—you keep putting a piece down and there's another piece there. You can't figure out how they're all fitting together until eventually it deals with itself. It requires a kind of trust in us as storytellers to get you through it, as it throws things at you. One minute you're here, one minute you're there. Hopefully they're all intriguing, entertaining or seductive things we're showing that will keep you on course. If you try to apply precise rationale to it, then you'll go crazy. It does eventually explain itself, but you have to go along for the ride.

SFE: It seems a lot of your films have the theme of fantasy vs. reality and involve outlandish quests. Is there a quest you're still on or an ultimate film you want to make?

GILLIAM: Not really. I just want to understand what life is about. I'm not actually interested in movies. It's just another way of telling stories. It just happens to be the most popular and probably most effective way of telling stories in our world. But I'm constantly trying to figure out what reality is, what it isn't, and what dreams are. I don't know. You make films, they're their own exploration, you play with it and see what kind of solutions you come up with.

I don't understand madness. I have dreams I swear are real, and maybe they are real. I probably remember certain things in my

dreams, more than I remember real events in my life. It's a strange thing. I have no real concept of time. So I'm intrigued by all these things.

SFE: *Piecing the movie together as a puzzle—does that relate to your directing style?*

GILLIAM: People work with me and notice I seem to know about all the jobs and I am involved with all the jobs. The sets, costumes, props—everything is interesting and important. I feel like I'm doing a big painting; it's a huge canvas, and everything has to be right in it. I make sure I'm involved with all the processes, but I try to work with good people who have good ideas. I start with an idea and I may say 'This is what I think it's about.' They come up with other ideas, and then I leap off from their ideas. It's a leapfrog game.

We try to find the film we're making as we're making it. It's a very strange process in that sense. We spend a lot of time talking about the characters with the actors—what the character is about, why they do what they do. You have a map of your script and you're trying to get from here to there. You set out, but along the way there are some really interesting paths in the forest. So you tend to take detours to see what will happen down there, and if that doesn't work out at least you have a map to get back to the path.

I try to inspire everybody to do great work, better work than they're usually capable of. I'm always demanding more than is possible with the time and money, and pushing people pretty hard. I think they appreciate it because their work is up on screen. It's not wasted stuff. I have little waste in my films.

SFE: *Is it hard to come up with a future world that hasn't been done before?*

GILLIAM: I don't know if we did. Sometimes I go, 'Oh, that kind of looks like Brazil.' We were influenced by an architectural illustrator named Lebbeus Wood, but in the end I was much less interested in the future, because the future is more about a state of mind. The future is serving the main story and it wasn't important, except in its relationship to the main part of the story.

What's interesting about this film is there are so many things happening in the world right now that seem to relate to this film. Gas attacks in the Tokyo subways, the Ebola strain virus. It's getting weird. Every other day I pick up a paper, and I'm thinking it's the Universal marketing team, drawing attention to certain events in the world that will actually relate to this film. Very strange.

SFE: *Despite the grim theme, there appears to be a lot of humor to the film.*

GILLIAM: I can't get away from having a humorous viewpoint about things. No matter how heavy things are, I lace it with humor. That's how I deal with the world anyway.

SFE: *Audiences are attracted to "dumb" movies nowadays. Do you think audiences will sit through something challenging?*

GILLIAM: There's only one way to find out—put it out there. I think this one has more emotional content. I suppose, with *The Fisher King*, I'm moving toward things that are more emotional. It's not the kind of emotion you normally see all over the place. This one is weird because it has these different elements. 'Oh, I'm watching a sci-fi film. Oops, I'm not watching a sci-fi film. Oh, it's time travel, but it's not important time travel. Then I'm watching a romance.' I



actually think it's poetry, a poetic view of things. It gets very dark, it gets very funny, and I hope it's very touching. The one thing I do know about the film is every time I see it I cry again. A lot of people go to see what they perceive as sci-fi now, and what they're talking about is hardware. They're not calling it sci-fi as a different way of viewing and perceiving the world. What I'm doing is sci-fi, but it's an older form of sci-fi—Ray Bradbury, Philip K. Dick sci-fi which has yet to be really captured on film.

SFE: *Do you make any unique use of computer-generated images in the film?*

GILLIAM: We have everything in there—blue screen, CGI—all the modern effects. Wait and see if you can even spot CGI in this film. We shouldn't notice it's in there, but it is. If it's done right, you won't even think about it. Giraffes, some flamingos, pigeons—they're all CGI. That's what's so bizarre. I get this perverse pleasure out of doing things in a reverse kind of way.

SFE: *Do you miss animation at all?*

GILLIAM: Not at all. I think I did it for too long. If there is anything I miss, it's just the freedom within animation where you invent worlds and anything could happen. And you could do it very easily and cheaply, that's what I like about it.

I enjoy working much more with actors now. People think I'm a good director with actors now. They used to think I was a visual guy and good with effects and making a lot with a little bit of money. And now I seem to be known as a director that actors will work



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The panel of scientists behind Cole's mission, from left: the botanist (H. Michael Walls), the geologist (Bob Adrian), the zoologist (Simon Jones), the astrophysicist (Carol Florence), the microbiologist (Bill Raymond), and the engineer (Ernest Abuba).

with. It's just a little different now. People are confused about what I am and what I do.

SFE: Do you still keep in contact with the members of Monty Python?

GILLIAM: We always see each other one way or another. Mike [Jones] has been working with John [Cleese] on *Fierce Creatures*. Eric Idle is in England

working with Terry Jones on *The Wind and the Willows*. Terry's playing toad, and Eric is playing rabbit.

SFE: Time Bandits was your first film squarely in the SF/fantasy genre....

GILLIAM: I wanted to make a film for everybody, for the entire family. I loved the idea of being able to leap back in history and meet your heroes and discover they weren't so heroic after all.

SFE: Is there talk of a sequel?

GILLIAM: As we speak there is talk of a sequel. A Canadian company called Paragon has bought Handmade films, and they would like to do a sequel. I think it's about time they did one. I don't think I would direct it, but I'm talking about writing it with Ian McEwan [writer of *The Good Son* and *The Ploughman's Lunch*]. We have an idea—especially with the millennium coming up, so we could do something fairly apocalyptic.

SFE: Why do you think you've had so much trouble with distribution?

GILLIAM: With *Brazil*, it was a studio which didn't want to release it. And *Munchausen*—they didn't release it. What people don't seem to understand is that *Munchausen* had only had 117 prints made in America, which is crazy. On a little art film you get 500 prints. We were the victims of a change at the studio. They were in the process of trying to balance the books to sell to Sony, and they didn't market the movie at all, one of many films that got that treatment. We were the most spectacular—this big monster that just disappeared. We were being used by people as another way of hammering the nail in [deposed studio president] David Puttman's

coffin. I've gotten caught too many times in the politics that go on within the studios.

SFE: There are so many versions of *Brazil* out there, which is the definitive cut?

GILLIAM: They're all definitive cuts—I like them all. There's the European cut, and the longest version of all is the European video version, where I put a scene back in. That's longer and has more stuff than any of them. I like the opening and closing of the American cut, which is the shortest of all of them. The reason for all these versions is in the script—I could never make up my mind how to end the thing. The European one has him in the chair, in the big torture chamber with nothing happening. The American version has the clouds beginning to fill up the room. I actually had it in the script both ways, and I could never decide. So now I have both endings.

SFE: What scene did you put back in the European video version?

GILLIAM: After he's hopped in the sack with Jill, he wakes up in the morning and he comes up to her and is stroking her blond hair, and he realizes it's not her hair—it's a wig and it's lying there and she's not around. She's gone. He looks around and she's sitting at the end of the bed and she's naked except for a pink boa. They start making love and that's when the cops come charging in. I cut that scene out, literally cut it on the day of the premiere in London, and I regretted it the minute I had done it. I was under a lot of pressure to shorten the film and I thought that would do. So I stuck it back in on video.

SFE: Was *Munchausen* ultimately a very frustrating experience?

GILLIAM: It probably frustrated me the most; I think we made a pretty extraordinary film that was then completely buried by the studio. I think if there is any film I have regrets about, it is that one. In trying to win over the studio I said I would cut it down to two hours, but now I want to add a tiny bit more into it, because I think I cut it too tightly; it's lacking rhythmic moments of repose or rest, it's a bit frenzied. But I think it's a f—king great film. That's what Pete Townsend said—I was going to do an advertisement, saying "A f—king masterpiece" says Pete Townsend." □



EUROPE

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TIME	MONDAY-FRIDAY
8-8:30A	G-FORCE
8:30-9A	GALAXY RANGERS
9-9:30A	TBA
9:30-10A	TBA
10-10:30A	BIONIC WOMAN
10:30-11A	SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN
11-11:30A	SOLAR MAN
11:30A-12P	TBA
12P-12:30P	TBA
12:30-1P	NIGHT GALLERY
1:30-2P	HITCHCOCK PRESENTS
2-2:30P	JUPITER MOON
2:30-3P	MY SECRET IDENTITY
3-3:30P	KNIGHTMARE
3:30-4P	LOST IN SPACE
4-4:30P	VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA
4:30-5P	THE INCREDIBLE HULK

TIME	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8-8:30A	RETURN/PLANET/APES	SECRETS OF ISIS
8:30-9A	JOURNEY/CENTER/EARTH	ARK II
9-9:30A	TBA	SPACE ACADEMY
9:30-10A	TBA	JASON OF STAR COMMAND
10-10:30A	TBA	MISFITS OF SCIENCE
10:30-11A	CAPTAIN POWER	BATTLESTAR GALACTICA
11-11:30A	VOYAGERS	TBA
11:30A-12P	SCI-FI BUZZ	INVISIBLE MAN
12P-12:30P	INSIDE SPACE	NIGHT STALKER
1-1:30P	BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	MOONLIGHT MATINEE
1:30-2P	MOONLIGHT MATINEE	SCI-FI FEATURE FILM
2-2:30P	RADIATION THEATER	
2:30-3P		
3-3:30P		
3:30-4P		
4-4:30P		
4:30-5P		
5-5:30P		
5:30-6P		
6-6:30P	MISFITS OF SCIENCE	
6:30-7P		

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7-7:30P	SWAMP THING	SWAMP THING	SWAMP THING	SWAMP THING	SWAMP THING	TBA	SPACE
7:30-8P	RAY BRADBURY	RAY BRADBURY	RAY BRADBURY	RAY BRADBURY	RAY BRADBURY		
8-8:30P	MOVIE	MOVIE	SCI-FI FEATURE FILM	MOVIE	MOVIE	DARK SHADOWS	INSIDE SPACE
8:30-9P						SCI-FI FEATURE FILM	SCI-FI BUZZ
9-9:30P							RADIATION THEATER
9:30-10P							
10-10:30P	OUTER LIMITS	OUTER LIMITS	OUTER LIMITS	OUTER LIMITS	OUTER LIMITS		
10:30-11PM	FRIDAY THE 13TH	FRIDAY THE 13TH	FRIDAY THE 13TH	FRIDAY THE 13TH	FRIDAY THE 13TH	FRIDAY THE 13TH	FRIDAY THE 13TH
11-11:30PM	MONDAY MOVIE	TUESDAY MOVIE	WEDNESDAY MOVIE	THURSDAY MOVIE	FRIDAY MOVIE	NIGHT STALKER	LATE MOVIE
11:30-MID						BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	
MID-12:30A							
12:30-1A							
1-1:30A							
1:30-2A							

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INSIDE THE TOY SHOP

Pixar, the former computer research division of ILM, proves itself as the studio of tomorrow with its first feature, Toy Story.

BY ROBERT MARTIN

WHEN WE SPOKE TO JOHN Lasseter, the vice president of creative development at Pixar Studios and director of its debut feature *Toy Story*, the animation crew of *Toy Story* had just finished celebrating the rendering of the computer-animated feature's final frames. "Now it's just a matter of getting it done," he told us. "We're down to the final stages, starting the post-production, the remixes for sound effects...in another week, Randy Newman will be recording the score, down in L.A. with a huge orchestra; that should be really exciting. We've been working on this picture for four years now, and we're finally seeing it all come together."

Buzz Lightyear, space explorer, pacifies a crowd of Martian game pieces.



The first pitch meeting between Pixar's creative staff and Walt Disney Studios took place in February 1991; a development deal was made, and the green light followed in August 1991.

Though the final screenplay is credited to Joss Whedon—the young tyro best known for the final rewrite of *Speed* and a forthcoming *Aliens* sequel—the film's story was developed in-house by Pixar and, like Pixar's short films *Tin Toy* and *Knickknack*, reflects Lasseter's own fascination with the secret lives of playthings. "In all the Pixar films, the characters are alive to me, in my mind," the director confides. "I almost think of them more as employees here at Pixar than as Pixar creations. I love toys, I'm a big toy collector, love playing with toys with my kids. I think animators in general tend to have a fondness for them.

"I felt there was a lot more potential in toys' lives than we had already explored in *Tin Toy*, so our first question was, what kind of story to tell with toys? We looked at what Disney had been doing with fantasy and fairy tales; and we looked around at all the different genres of films, and when we hit on

the idea of a buddy picture, we recognized that idea's potential. So we screened a whole lot of buddy pictures: *The Defiant Ones*, *The Odd Couple*, *Midnight Run*, *48 Hours*, the *Lethal Weapon* series.

"What we wanted to do was a great character film, something where you had great characters and the audience really felt them grow. That's where you get a lot of 'heart' in a picture, when you have likeable characters, and stay with them through their whole struggle—when they triumph, you triumph. If you look at the great buddy pictures, you see that process is a natural thing, where two characters start out as opposites and, through their need to be together to achieve their separate goals, they grow, and in the end they are inseparable."

The story development process was done in close collaboration with the financing studio. "One of the great aspects of our relationship with Disney," says Lasseter, "is that they have some great people there as story editors, and really talented development executives. Tom Schumacher, who heads feature animation development, is fantastic to work with on story and character development."

In *Toy Story*, Woody (Tom Hanks), a pull-string cowboy doll, is the most popular toy in the bedroom of six-year-old Andy (John Morris, with Laurie Metcalf as his mom) until the arrival of Buzz Lightyear (Tim Allen), a space adventurer equipped with fold-out wings, a push-button laser gun, a wrist communicator, and a spiffy digital voice. The plain-spoken cowpoke is particularly annoyed when he learns that Buzz is convinced that he is not a toy, but a stranded space traveler who must repair his spaceship (the box in which he arrived) in order to return to his duties as a space ranger.

It's bad enough that Buzz gets the majority of Andy's attention; worse, Buzz effortlessly wins the admiration of Woody's friends, including Slinky Dog (Jim Varney), a coiled springer weiner hound; the neurotic dinosaur Rex (Wallace Shawn); grumpy Mr. Potato Head (Don Rickles); and Hamm (John Ratzenberger), the pigheaded piggy bank. But the final straw occurs when Woody discovers that Buzz has become his chief competition for the affections of Bo Peep (Annie Potts), the table lamp who is the light of his life.

The Westerner plots to rid of Buzz once



to the surface of an object] and so on—that are very reminiscent of the real world. We took something that is clearly not real and set out to make it look as real as possible.

"Our goal wasn't to convince anyone that we went out and shot a real world, but the result is far more realistic-looking than any animated film. In some sense it's akin to puppet animation, where you can work with light much as you do in a live-action film."

Character design was already in progress as voice casting began, though some designs were later altered to make some characters a better visual "fit" to their voices—Jim Varney's performance as Slinky Dog, for instance. "The original design was virtually the same, but more of a perky puppy. When we heard what Jim Varney was giving us, we immediately drooped the ears a bit, and half-closed the eyes, and put a little crick in his neck—making him more of a 'countrified' hound."

"Humans are clearly the most difficult challenge in *Toy Story*, and we chose to design our human characters as caricatures. We didn't want people to think we were attempting to do live-action, for one thing, and we also wanted the humans to be of the same world as our other characters. We were careful not to take the caricature too far, though, as we wanted the audience to be able to clearly distinguish characters who were toys from the human characters."

The remarkable roster of voice talent in the film was chosen entirely by Pixar, says Lasseter, though undoubtedly the Disney name helped to recruit a dream cast. Throughout the film's vocal recording sessions, a video camera was closely focused on the faces of the actors, providing a wealth of "reference art" that the animators could view from their animation workstations. When the animators had a character saying a line, they could make reference to the tape and watch not only the exact take that was used, but all the different takes to find an apt expression.

"Tom Hanks was especially good," says Lasseter, "because he knew we were doing this and why; he really gave us a lot to work with,

Left, Woody announces to his assembled toy buddies the coming of a momentous event: young Andy's forthcoming birthday party. Above, Woody dispatches a "Bucket O Soldiers" to a special mission at Andy's party.

not just by his voice, but in acting and facial expressions. It got to where, if Woody was doing something with an object in a scene, we'd bring in props that were in some way similar. And he's such a great ad-libber, he'd come up with neat lines, inspired by just having the prop there."

Traditional animation calls for each character to have a model sheet, a "bible" of body language that guides the animator to the character's appearance in different angles, as well as the unique dynamics of a character's motion. For *Toy Story*, the equivalent was achieved with a "library" for each character of motions, walk cycles and facial expressions that could be pulled into the system and modified to suit each situation and setting.

After clips from *Toy Story* were presented at Siggraph '95—the annual expo attended by computer graphics professionals worldwide—Pixar was declared by some as having solved the ubiquitous problem of the "hair helmet" so often seen in computer animation. But there was no cry of "Eureka! I have solved the hair problem!" heard in the studio.

"It's never that way," says Lasseter. "It's always, 'here's a theory, this might work, let's try that.' You just keep picking away, and when you least expect it, something looks amazing and you go 'whoa! look at that!' And it's not always what you see, but the potential of what you see, that tells you the direction to take. We're still a ways away from beautiful, long, flowing hair in the breeze. But I've seen some neat developments in that direction from other people."

"Though we put a great deal of work into our human models, the focus of the film remains the toys and their personalities. From a filmmaking viewpoint, we approached

and for all, but the plan backfires and both Buzz and Woody become lost toys, desperately seeking their way home through the treacherous outside world, including a trip through a space-themed fast food/arcade franchise called Pizza Planet, and facing captivity by the toy-torturing neighborhood bully Sid (Eric Von Detten) and his equally savage dog Scud.

WITH SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT underway, Lasseter and art director Ralph Eggleston pursued the next step, devising the precise "look" the filmmakers wanted for *Toy Story*'s entirely synthesized world. "We wanted to make this world believable, number one," says Lasseter. "We were going for a caricatured reality; the design and shape of everything is caricatured, and therefore to some extent simpler than it might be in reality, but there are a lot of details in the lighting—in the shaders [computer code that determines the behavior of virtual light] and the texture-maps [a shader that is "wrapped"



Above, Woody and Buzz in a nose-to-helmet confrontation. Right, much of Toy Story's principal supporting cast, including (from left) Rex's leg, Mr. Potato Head, Slinky Dog and Hamm the piggy bank. In the background is the fair lady Bo Peep.

it after taking a good look at *Lady and the Tramp*, a story about dogs, and observed how the humans were portrayed in that film. There, humans are definitely secondary characters—you see them, they're not hidden at all, but they are definitely not the focus of the story."

Because Pixar employed a total of 27 animators for the 76 characters in *Toy Story*—about half the number of animators for Disney's *Pocahontas*—it was largely impractical to assign an animator to each individual character, as is often done in traditional animation. "In the beginning, we had certain people who were leads on particular characters, especially secondary toy characters, where people set a certain style. Woody, though, is in almost the entire film, so everyone got a chance to animate him.

"The exciting thing for the animators on this picture is that they each ended up doing as much as seven continuous minutes of animation in the film—instead of giving them a character, we'd instead say, here, these five shots are yours," says Lasseter.

Often, when shot sequences occurred within a single location, the animators developed the shots as a single, long sequence, which could later be broken up into the shots described by the script by altering the placement of the "camera" (strictly a virtual camera, of course, as there is no camera used in the process), within the modeled scene.

Lasseter says: "It's unique to this type of film that after the animation was done, but before the rendering of final frames, we could take a look at the animation, in basic polygon form, and tweak the camera a bit—for instance, if the movement ends too high up in the frame, we could have the camera

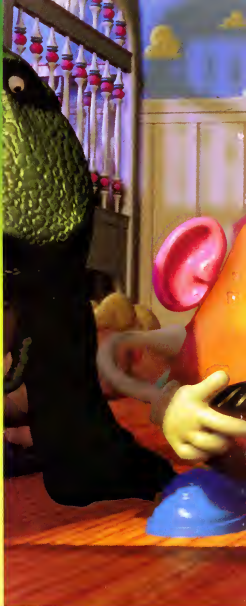
track the movement, without changing any of the animation."

Complex lighting effects, only visible in the fully rendered finished product, were checked by producing what Lasseter calls "tableaux"—postage stamp-sized frames, fully rendered to give an exact preview of a scene with all lighting effects in place; as many as twenty or more tableaux were used to check the alteration of lighting within a single scene.

The animation itself was built using Pixar's own Renderman and MenV software, supplemented by Lightwave's Alias for building computer models on Silicon Graphics workstations. The raw animation data is then fed to a huge bank of Sun SPARCstations, equipped with a total of nearly 300 microprocessors, which render the finished full-resolution frames. The studio's output during *Toy Story*'s production averaged about three minutes per week, according to Barbara Robertson's thorough account of the production's technical side in August's *Computer Graphics World* Magazine. In comparison, Pixar's first short, *Luxo, Jr.*, ran under two minutes in length and took 18 weeks to produce in 1986.

THE NEXT PIXAR FEATURE, Lasseter assures us, will not take four years. "One of the things you have to realize is that, in making *Toy Story*, we also built the studio; a lot of the effort went into determining just how a 75-minute computer-animated feature is done. Starting this picture, it was as if someone sat down with you to tell you how, in theory, swimming works—there's this stuff called water, you hold your breath, move your arms and kick your feet, grab a breath, and repeat. And then they throw you in the deep end.

"That's how it felt; we said, 'All right, let's just do it,' and boom, there we were. The difference in telling a story that's 5 minutes long versus a story that's 75 minutes long is just



phenomenal—as is the difference between making a film that's 40 shots and a film that's 1,700 shots. On some things there's an economy of scale—once you build a model for a character, that's it. It doesn't matter whether you make one frame or a 75-minute film.

"Pixar is now a true digital studio. The animators' workstations are hooked up to a screening room; when we were in animation, we would walk into the screening room with 27 animators every morning at 8:30, poke a button and go to each animator's workstation and have a look. We use a very high-quality, big-screen video projector—I wanted each animator to be able to see his work big, because when you're working day-to-day on a terminal, you have to remember that what you're doing is going to wind up on a big 40-foot-high screen somewhere. Timing, cutting, and staging all change when you go from a small screen to a big screen. When you have something zip from one side of the screen to the other on TV, you can take that in. In a movie theater, you're liable to give the audience whiplash.

"The AVID digital editing system is



wired into the screening room as well, so we could poke a button and watch the latest reels. It was very exciting figuring all this out, and engaging the process of assembling a state-of-the-art digital studio. Disney has this tremendous infrastructure and a long history of making films a certain way that has worked very well for them. It was great to be able to learn from that and, at the same time, to assemble this facility, practically starting from scratch; along the way Disney learned a lot about what could be done as well."

Pixar will approach its next project equipped with an extensive digital library of objects, settings, and characters created for *Toy Story* that can be modified for other purposes with relative ease. Unmodified, the "cast" of *Toy Story* is already pretty busy, performing in additional animation for two CD-ROM products. And even as the digital cast is "acting," the identical clones are modeling for still illustrations for books and promotional items; the data behind the models of *Toy Story* can just as easily be used to create molds for toys and models that follow pre-

cisely the contours that we'll see on screen when the film opens this December.

Lasseter doesn't rule out the possibility of a *Toy Story* sequel, or even—with coming improvements in processing speed and power—a possible Saturday morning series. "In traditional animation," he points out, "if you make another picture featuring the same characters, you have to re-draw them. With puppet animation, the puppets only last for a few shots before they need to be re-built, but these computer models last.

"We're expanding our staff and the facility so that we can make the next film faster, while at the same time handling the CD-ROMs and other projects coming up as a result of *Toy Story*. There will definitely be other directors working on films here in the future as well, and we're developing a number of story ideas and CD-ROM projects."

Lasseter was especially pleased when we noted that the Pixar crew—from the credits of *Luxo, Jr.*, in 1986, through the studio's other shorts (*Red's Dream*, *Tin Toy*, and *Knickknack*), to this year's *Toy Story*—has remained a remarkably stable team. "Almost as impor-

tant as making a great film, we've tried to make a fantastic working environment for the people here. We have no turnover at all—we just keep growing! All the same people that worked on the short films have worked on *Toy Story*, and they're going to be here for the next picture and the picture after that. This is what we dreamed of—to have great people to work with, to have them happy in their work, and to make great movies."

We closed our talk by asking Lasseter a question for the career-minded among our younger readers: What three things must a young person who wants to be a computer animator learn? "The computer is only a tool," says Lasseter. "No computer is going to do the animation for you, you're going to do the animation on a computer. You need to learn the basics of animation. So far, the only way that I know of to learn this is through traditional animation, at Cal-Arts, or at Ringling down in Florida, or any of the various schools that are cropping up to teach animation skills. Basic skills—timing, staging, sense of caricature. That's the first, second and the third thing." □

SLIDING BACK

Robert Weiss, co-creator of Sliders, prepares to explore more worlds.

BY ROBERT MARTIN

WHEN *SLIDERS* REACHED ITS CONCLUDING episode—just eight short weeks after its debut on the Fox network—a lot of questions remained unanswered. A fifth “slider” had abandoned his own world to join the group; and Quinn Mallory, the show’s central character, had taken a bullet. On Delphi, the Fox TV’s official online service, and in the unofficial Usenet newsgroup “alt.sliders” on the Internet, questions flew: Was Jerry O’Connell’s Quinn character out of the series? Was the interloper from another world about to become the focal point? Would Quinn recover? Or would another Quinn, from a parallel world, be recruited to lead the sliders?

All such questions faded into background noise when, in mid-May, Fox announced its fall 1995 schedule. Both *VR-5* and *Sliders*, Fox’s two new SF entries, were absent, and the fans found a new priority: Fox’s E-mail and postal addresses were widely disseminated via the computer networks, and a deluge commenced. Fox soon responded to the *Sliders*’ fans with the announcement that *Sliders* was not canceled, but merely “in hiatus”—a limbo state that could as easily lead to its return as to its extinction. (*VR-5* viewers are still sending letters, but that’s another matter.)

If you think all of this put *Sliders*’ fans in suspense, consider the situation of Robert Weiss, with Tracy Tormé a co-creator of the series, and one of its executive producers. According to Weiss, Fox had faced “a complicated task because they have lots of stuff in development. They have to consider the overall direction that they want to take the network—they have the individual strategy they’re trying to create each evening; and then it gets down to half-hour by half-hour, where each network struggles to maintain its patch of ground. And Fox is further limited by the fact that they have less prime-time hours than the other three networks.

“After taking all of that into account, we didn’t show up on the original announcement of the fall schedule. We immediately planned to go back to them to make our case for mid-season replacement.

“We went back and made our case, talking about the potential of the series, and about what we had learned in doing the first shows. We knew, for instance, that it was best to keep the sliders mostly together, rather than splitting them up, because it’s far more difficult to service three or four stories in one hour. We discussed other kinds of stories that we might do, running themes, and I think that, in the course of the discussions, we were able to reinvent Fox’s

excitement for the show.”

The deluge of fan mail, Weiss grants, had to help Fox in making the right decision. And additional ratings information—demographic breakdowns that showed the right advertiser-targeted groups were tuning in—helped to clinch the deal.

Fox ordered the production of 13 new *Sliders* shows, and filming began in October; the show’s return is most likely to be near the start of 1996, in a time-slot yet to be determined.

Weiss tells us that parallelism was at work even in *Sliders*’ origins, as the seed of the idea

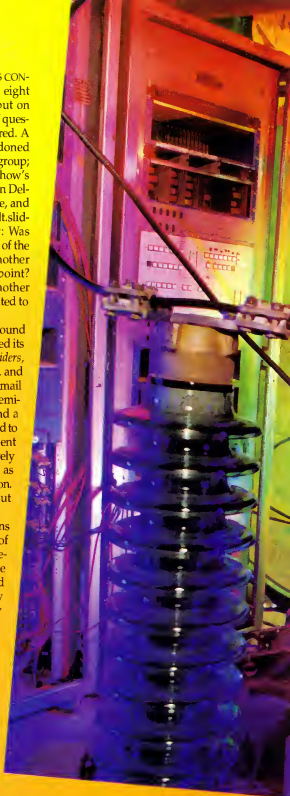




Photo: © Fox Television

was carried in two minds. "It had been a concurrent thought in both my mind and in Tracy's," he says. "For years, I'd wanted to do a show about parallel worlds. I'd been a great *Time Tunnel* fan, and there had been a few *Twilight Zone* shows about alternate realities that stuck with me. Over the years, there have been a few series involving time travel, but nothing about parallel universes.

"The shorthand in my head for this was '*Time Tunnel* sideways,' where it was the pre-

sented year in each visited universe, but small or large details were different, with alternate histories and cultures producing variations on our own.

"Tracy, meanwhile, had read a story that, if I recall properly, concerned a world where George Washington had been killed in a Revolutionary War battle, and how things had turned out differently. Then he and I met, and right around that time, *Discover* maga-

zine ran a story about parallel universes, and right on the cover was an illustration depicting parallel Earths, multiple images of the planet with each one colored a bit differently—in fact, you'll see some resonance with that image in our main title.

"So when the two of us began to talk about working together, and this particular topic came up, we wound up talking for hours. We made a list of the Earths we might like to visit, and that's what sparked it. We decided to work together on this as co-creators.

The scientific rationale behind *Sliders* is firmly rooted in theoretical physics, particularly in the realm of quantum mechanics, via the "many worlds" theory, the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, and the paradox of Schrödinger's cat (not incidentally, "Schrödinger" was the name of Quinn's cat in the series pilot). But when it came to selling the series idea, neither Weiss nor Tormé felt a seminar on theoretical physics would make an effective approach.

"It was tricky selling it," Weiss grants. "For people who are well-versed in science fiction, or in the theoretical sciences, parallel worlds are not difficult to grasp. For someone who isn't, it's another matter. So, when we pitched the concept at first, very early on we were surprised by people stopping us to say, 'What do you mean, a parallel universe? What are you talking about?'"

"We came to build our pitch around the phrase, 'What if?' 'What if there was a world where...' and we'd fill in the blanks. People would be intrigued with those notions; once they were hooked, we'd go on to the idea that all those worlds exist right now, and if there was a way to open up a wormhole, you could slide to them.

Weiss and Tormé felt that the main title for *Sliders* should serve to ease the viewer into the show's unusual premise. In a voiceover, Quinn's character sums it up: "What if you could find brand new worlds, right here on Earth, where anything's possible? Same planet—different dimension. I've found the gateway!"

"A lot of shows don't have a main title any more," says Weiss. "It's just bang! and you're in the middle of it. The networks regard some titles as clutter that add nothing to content. Fox agreed that ours was a special case, and that it required a main title just to allow us to recap the main premise each week."

This summer, *Sliders* repeats graced the

A Studio is Born

Toy Story is the culmination of more than ten years of effort by a diverse crew of scientists and artists. Steven P. Jobs, the chairman and CEO of Pixar Studios, will always be legendary for the co-creation with Steve Wozniak of the Apple computer. Jobs' experience has brought Pixar to the position of being the first fully digital studio to bring an entirely computer-animated feature to the screen as the first of a three-picture deal with Disney Studios.

Pixar began a relaunch as an independent studio in 1986, when Jobs bought the computer research division of ILM from Lucasfilms. Pixar's current unique relationship with Disney, especially since the megastudio's acquisition of Capital Cities/ABC, is a friendship with a 5-million-pound gorilla. Pixar's expanding ability to rapidly produce the highest possible quality of computer animation seems likely to become a prime source for Disney's widely expanding need to fill the schedules of its numerous broadcast, cable, screen, and video interests.

The sources of Pixar's technical expertise are as varied as its high-level teams of animators who program, programmers who can rig high speed networks, and networking experts who can animate. Among the firm's greatest resources are its chief technical officer, Dr. Edwin Catmull, and research supervisor, Dr. William T. Reeves. Catmull won his technical Oscar for the development of Pixar's digital effects software "RenderMan"; Reeves' work on particle systems imaging—first put to use for the "Genesis" effects of *Star Trek II*—widely expanded the repertoire of CGI effects. Catmull, Reeves, and their teams at Pixar, ILM, and various universities have pioneered uncounted innovations now universally applied in CG production, including means for determining hidden surfaces of 3-D objects, matte algebra for seamless compositing of images, shaders (code describing the behavior of virtual light), texture maps (shaders used as "wrapping" on the surface of objects to emulate natural—and unnatural—surfaces), and RGB paint systems which have revolutionized animation and comic book production.

Toy Story's producer, Ralph J. Guggenheim, who holds a Master's degree in computer graphics from Carnegie-Mellon University, began his career at New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) in the late '70s, when that college was host to the most advanced computer animation facility on the planet. Much of the future Lucasfilm/Pixar group first came together at NYIT and moved with Guggenheim to Lucasfilm.

Toy Story brings this expertise to bear on the vision of director John Lasseter, whose

own path to Pixar began in the study of traditional animation at California Institute of the Arts, and a stint as a Disney animator from 1979 through 1983. At the time, Disney animation had a remarkable pool of talent, including Lasseter's friends Henry Selick (the director of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*) and the forthcoming *James and the Giant Peach*) and Tim Burton.

But Disney was creatively floundering at the time, giving more attention to its theme parks than to its film division. Disney seemed oblivious to the talent in their midst, and many of the young hopefuls drawn to Disney at the time found the animation mecca a disappointment: a committee-run enclave that served more to frustrate than spark creativity.

Lasseter's creative juices were stirred at Disney, though, when he saw the MAGI company's effects work for *Tron*. He then worked with Disney senior animator Glen Keane and MAGI on a test combining computer-generated backgrounds with animation. The results pumped Lasseter's enthusiasm, but higher-ups at Disney were unable to share his vision; Lasseter moved to ILM.

Just a month after Lasseter's departure, Michael Eisner took the reins of Disney Studios and, along with Roy Disney and Jeffrey Katzenberg, worked a transformation of that studio, forging partnerships of creativity and commerce that few thought possible at "the oldest studio in Hollywood."

At the same time, ILM's computer research division had its own transformation, into Pixar. Though equipped to provide computer services to other studios, as it did for the "stained glass knight" sequence of *Young Sherlock Holmes*, the new studio was redirected toward producing its own, self-contained miniseries. These included numerous commercials, as well as its own series of animated shorts beginning with *Luxo, Jr.*, an Oscar nominee for Best Animated Short Film in 1986. Disney immediately began courting Lasseter, while working with Pixar to develop the CAPS digital ink and paint system. When another Pixar short, *Tin Toy*, snared the 1988 Oscar, Disney made a full-court press to bring Lasseter back. Instead, Lasseter and Pixar pitched *Toy Story* to that end, and the rest is history—or it soon will be.

Jobs compares the debut of *Toy Story* to that of the first "talkie." He may be right, though this is a revolution that will develop slowly as the technology matures. His Pixar is poised to become a media leader in the 21st century and is already a tangible representation of the marriage of science and art that is now transforming the world of entertainment.

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Mallory, Professor Maximillian P. Arturo (John Rhys-Davies), and Wade Kathleen Wells (Sabrina Lloyd) uncover a revelatory note in the Mallory home on a wintry Earth.

Sunday 7 p.m. time-slot—a perilous position for any series that isn't *60 Minutes*. This fall, *Sliders* disappears for a few months, yielding their slot to Fox's new SF series, *Space: Above and Beyond*. By making the hour that precedes *The Simpsons* a regular spot for SF programming, Fox hopes that the legendary loyalty of science fiction fans might help to crack the CBS grip on that hour, and expand its already successful Sunday lineup. This strategy is somewhat reminiscent of similar attempts at 8 p.m. Fridays, with *M.A.N.T.I.S.* and *VR-5*, in a continuing effort to reach the audience of *The X-Files*. Both attempts to create a Friday night science fiction block failed.

"But conventional wisdom says you don't precede a highly rated show," Weiss explains. "You follow it, so that you get the benefit of the audience it has drawn. Unfortunately, what follows *X-Files* is the news. The only way that the show's audience could provide a lead-in is if it were moved to 8 p.m."

"In our current status as a mid-season replacement, we'll be waiting to see what falls off the schedule—we could wind up anywhere on the schedule. *Sliders* can be programmed with some versatility."

Plans for next year remain largely unsettled, but Weiss did offer some hints as to the general direction the show would take. "Looking over the shows, some of them did better than others, and I think we did better with our edgier shows. They're chancier for us to do, because you don't know how they're going to hit the audience sometimes. I'll give you an example from the first eight; when we did the show 'Fever,' this was one that some folks were nervous about, and it turned out to be one of our better shows."

Weiss also expresses a preference for the final, cliffhanging episode, "The Luck of the Draw." "The nice thing about that episode," he says, "is that it strikes one tone in the first half. They've come to a world that is nearly utopia; Wade's found a nice guy there; and you think that maybe they'll stay. Then at the halfway point they find out what it's all about, and the whole show takes a giant left turn, and the whole tone changes. That's the kind of show we'd like to do more of, because it assumes that the audience is smart."

The attentive viewer may also note that arrival on that world refers back to the pilot episode, when Quinn Mallory is visited by another Quinn, a slider from a parallel world. The visitor makes mention of a world he'd visited "where everyone is happy;" and that he was going to keep sliding until that world was once again found.

Though it may be hard to accept that Quinn Two's ideal was so terribly flawed, that world was indeed the world he had been seeking. "When we were deciding where we were going to take the series, we thought immediately of the other Quinn's speech in the pilot, about a utopia," says Weiss. "We didn't want just a series of negative worlds. He had also mentioned a world where the Cubs won the pennant three years in a row, but we didn't think we could get an episode out of that one. So there was that utopian world, but of course we put a spin on it, to create dramatic conflict."

The new season is also bound to benefit from lessons learned in the difficulties of administering a Canadian production from Los Angeles. Although the series is set in San Francisco, the bulk of the show is made in Vancouver, where a weaker Canadian dollar allows maximum production value on the smaller budget allowed to Fox shows.

"We were fortunate this last season, as I was able to spend time in Vancouver. During most of the shooting period I was in the editing room in Los Angeles, and my part-

ner, Leslie Belzberg, spent a lot of time in Vancouver. But it would be a lot easier if it were shot in Los Angeles, so you could walk right from the writer's offices to the set and back, if there were questions or problems. But because we shoot in Vancouver, the writers aren't accessible from the set, and we put a lot of stress on trying to have the material fully formed before it goes up there."

Once the completed shows started arriving at Fox, another "major cause of hair loss" began for Weiss, as the broadcast order of the shows diverted from the continuity established in a certain number of the shows. "There was a very specific order," says Weiss. "We'd had a lot of discussion at the outset about how tightly the shows should interlock, because when shows go into syndication, they are often not shown in the order they were broadcast; it turns out that many one-hour shows that must be seen chronologically don't fare very well. So we didn't want to do too much of that. However, since we had our characters escaping one world to slide into the next, we had a built-in problem."

"As we first laid out the air order, it all would have made sense. When the network started seeing the shows as they came in, their consideration was how to build viewership. They wanted to start with what they felt was stronger material, and that was how 'Fever' moved up in the viewing order."

"They were absolutely right, because if you start off with weak shows, you're never going to build the audience. But it affected us in two ways; it affected how we went in and out of shows, and it also affected a couple of shows internally."

"For example, there was an explanation of the timer in the 'Summer of Love' episode, which was originally to follow the pilot. On each slide, a window would open up after a predetermined amount of time, which was random. So, each time they arrive on a world, they look at the timer, which tells them how much time they have before that 'window of opportunity' opens up. They miss that window, and they're stranded for 29.7 years."

"So when the air order was changed, that scene didn't play properly, and we eliminated it. When we went into repeats, there was some discussion of what order they should be rebroadcast, but—as they weren't about to reedit the episode to put that material back in—we decided that there was no point in going back to the original air order. For the purists who are out there spotting these 'continuity errors,' they are absolutely right, but it was done for the overall benefit of the series."

Meanwhile, Weiss is making good use of his time on "hiatus"—he is also president of Broadway Pictures, working with Lorne Michaels on the feature film comedy *Black Sheep*, starring Chris Farley and David Spade. And by the time you read this, that film should be wrapped, and a new crop of *Sliders* scripts should be coming out of the pipeline as production resumes on the series that almost almost slid away. □

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HATHERINE JANEWAY

Continued from page 45

Williams: The Adventure Begins, starring Fred Ward as the pulp fiction soldier-of-fortune.

"*A Stranger in Watching* is a pretty gritty movie, but it was great working with Rip Torn," says Mulgrew. "It allowed me to stretch myself as an actor—but it was hard being in Grand Central Station with a bunch of mad people day in and day out, and trying to maintain your sanity. As for *Remo*, I never understood why it never become a franchise. That was the whole intention. And when there wasn't a film sequel, they wanted to take it to television. I don't know why the whole thing didn't fly, but much of it was political. The actors never get the inside dope about that stuff, which is unfortunate."

While Mulgrew appeared in quite a few other films, she is most familiar to audiences for her work in television, including a role opposite James Garner in the comedy *Man of the People*, and her recurring characters on both *Cheers* and *Murphy Brown*.

"I would have liked a broader film feature career but that didn't happen," Mulgrew allows. "I feel, though, that this is a marvelous showcase for me, and *Voyager* is a lot better than most of television. The writing is superior to any I've ever seen."

Though *Trek* schedules allow little time to pursue outside roles, Mulgrew does find the time to do voiceovers for cartoons. She can be heard as the voice of "The Red Claw" on Fox's *The Adventures of Batman and Robin*, and currently voices a recurring character on Disney's *Gargoyles*. "I'm committed to Janeway, but the cartoon people are very flexible," she says. "They fit me in when I have a few hours."

While any television series is demanding, *Trek* shows have a reputation for being even more so, yet Mulgrew finds herself very content in the Janeway role and is looking forward to the four years remaining on her *Trek* contract. "Is it daunting to me?" Mulgrew asks. "No, not at all. I feel very lucky. I love this character and even more than that, I love this group of people. I can see a longevity here without disturbance, as long as I keep my eye on the sparrow, keep the work good, and try to complicate the character in the best ways possible. Actors want to work, so I now have workshop every day. I have a lab to go to. There is no greater happiness."

And, if history once again repeats itself, a *Voyager* feature film seems nearly inevitable at some distant point on the horizon. Does following the *Generations* crew to the big-screen seem an enticing option?

"I loved *Generations*," Mulgrew replies. "It would be lovely to do that one day. Maybe in five years we will—if the ship gets back." Mulgrew pauses and an evil grin, uncharacteristic of Captain Janeway, crosses her face. "I guess that means I get to kill Picard then," she laughs. "Yeah, that's probably the deal." □



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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

DAYTIME

TIME	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Informational	Informational	Informational
6:30			
7:00	Animation Station: Droids/Ewoks		
7:30	The Bionic Six		
8:00	Transformers		
8:30	New Adventures of Gigantor		
9:00	Lost in Space	Saturday Anime	Mad Scientists' Kids Club
9:30			TBA
10:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Sci-Fi Buzz
10:30			C-Net Central
11:00	Dark Shadows	Land of the Giants	Inside Space
11:30	Dark Shadows (or SF Trader on Friday)		Mysteries, Magic, Miracles
Noon	Sci-Fi Series Collection	Swamp Thing	Galactica 1980
12:30		Dracula: The Series	
1:00	Alfred Hitchcock Presents	My Secret Identity	Starman
1:30	One Step Beyond	My Secret Identity	
2:00	Night Gallery	Moonlight Matinee	UFO
2:30	Ray Bradbury Theater		
3:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Moonlight Matinee
3:30			
4:00	Voyagers/ Misfits of Science	Radiation Theater	
4:30			Radiation Theater
5:00	The Bionic Woman		
5:30			
6:00	The Six Million Dollar Man	TekWar	
6:30			Sci-Fi Trader

EVENING

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
7:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	C-Net Central	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
8:00	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Buzz	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
8:30					Myst/Mag/Miracles	Film	Amazing Stories
9:00	SF Series Collection*	SF Series Collection*	SF Series Collection*	SF Series Collection*	Inside Space		Alien Nation
9:30					Anti Gravity Room		
10:00	Friday 13th: Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	On-line Showcase**	Max Headroom	War of the Worlds
10:30							

LATE NIGHT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
11:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	C-Net Central	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
Midnite	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Buzz	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
12:30					Myst/Mag/Miracles	Film	Amazing Stories
1:00	SF Series Collection*	SF Series Collection*	SF Series Collection*	SF Series Collection*	Inside Space		Alien Nation
1:30					Anti Gravity Room		
2:00	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	On-Line Showcase**	Max Headroom	War of the Worlds
2:30							
3:00	Informational	Informational	Informational	Suspense Theater	Retro TV	Radiation Theater	One Step Beyond/SF Trader

All programming shown Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone. Titles in red denote original programming. All programming subject to change. This schedule is effective through 12/31/95. Prime/Late Collection: Automan, Space Rangers, She-Wolf of London.
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NOVEMBER MOVIES ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATURDAY, 11/4

9:00 a.m. **Dominion Tank**
Police - Part I
1992, Animation
2:00 p.m. **Island of Lost Souls**
1933, Horror, Charles
Laughton
3:30 p.m. **Robinson Crusoe**
on Mars
1964, Science Fiction, Paul
Mantee
8:00 p.m. **Ghost Story**
1981, Horror, Doug
Fairbanks, Jr.
12:00 a.m. **Ghost Story**
1981, Horror, Doug
Fairbanks, Jr.
3:00 a.m. **Captive Wild**
Women (New)
1943, Horror, John Carradine

SUNDAY, 11/5

12:00 p.m. **Captain America**
1979, Superhero, Reb Brown
2:00 p.m. **Captain America 2**
1979, Superhero, Reb Brown
4:00 p.m. **Dr. Strange**
1978, Superhero, Peter
Hooten
6:00 p.m. **The Incredible**
Hulk Returns
1988, Science Fiction, Bill
Bixby
9:00 a.m. **Trial of the**
Incredible Hulk
1989, Science Fiction, Bill
Bixby
10:00 p.m. **Death of the**
Incredible Hulk
1990, Science Fiction, Bill
Bixby

SATURDAY, 11/11

9:00 a.m. **Dominion Tank**
Police-Part II
1992, Animation
2:00 p.m. **Hauser's Memory**
1970, Science Fiction, David
McCallum
4:00 p.m. **The Deadly Bees**
1967, Horror, Frank Finlay
8:00 p.m. **The UFO Incident**
1975, Science Fiction, James
Earl Jones
12:00 a.m. **The UFO Incident**
1975, Science Fiction, James
Earl Jones
3:00 a.m. **The Monster and**
the Girl (New)
1941, Science Fiction, Ellen
Drew

SUNDAY, 11/12

3:00 p.m. **Arcade**
1993, Science Fiction, Megan
Ward
5:00 p.m. **Pulse**
1988, Horror, Cliff DeYoung
12:00 a.m. **Six Million Dollar**
Man: The Secret of Bigfoot
Parts I & II
1976, Science Fiction, Lee
Majors
1:00 a.m. **Six Million Dollar**
Man: The Secret of Bigfoot

Parts I & II
1976, Science Fiction, Lee
Majors

TUESDAY, 11/14

9:00 p.m. **The Bionic Woman:**
Fembot in Las Vegas Parts I
& II
1976, Lee Majors
1:00 a.m. **The Bionic Woman:**
Fembot in Las Vegas Parts I
& II
1976, Lee Majors

WEDNESDAY, 11/15

9:00 p.m. **Six Million Dollar**
Man: Dark Side of the Moon
Parts I & II
1976, Science Fiction, Lee
Majors
1:00 a.m. **Six Million Dollar**
Man: Dark Side of the Moon
Parts I & II
1976, Science Fiction, Lee
Majors

THURSDAY, 11/16

9:00 p.m. **The Bionic Woman:**
The Bionic Dog Parts I & II
1976, Science Fiction, Lee
Majors
1:00 a.m. **The Bionic Woman:**
The Bionic Dog Parts I & II
1976, Science Fiction, Lee
Majors

SATURDAY, 11/18

9:00 a.m. **Akira***
1987, Animation
2:00 p.m. **Shock Treatment**
1971, Musical, Jessica Harper
4:00 p.m. **AbraXas: Guardian**
of the Future
1990, Science Fiction, Jessie
Ventura
8:00 p.m. **Night of the Comet**
1984, Science Fiction, Mary C.
Stewart
12:00 a.m. **Night of the**
Comet
1984, Science Fiction, Mary C.
Stewart
3:00 a.m. **The Invisible**
Woman (New)
1941, Science Fiction, Virginia
Bruce

SUNDAY, 11/19

3:00 p.m. **Spontaneous**
Combustion
1990, Horror, Brad Douirf
5:00 p.m. **Firestarter**
1984, Horror, George C. Scott

MONDAY, 11/20

5:00 p.m. **The Fantasy Worlds**
of Irwin Allen
1995, Biography, June
Lockhart

TUESDAY, 11/21

9:00 a.m. **The Fantasy Worlds**
of Irwin Allen
1995, Biography, June
Lockhart

WEDNESDAY, 11/22

8:00 p.m. **The Fantasy Worlds**
of Irwin Allen
1995, Biography, June
Lockhart

12:00 a.m. **The Fantasy**
Worlds of Irwin Allen
1995, Biography, June
Lockhart

THURSDAY, 11/23

7:00 p.m. **Star Wars**
1977, Science Fiction, Mark
Hamill
10:00 p.m. **The Making of**
Star Wars
1978, Documentary
11:00 p.m. **Star Wars**
1977, Science Fiction, Mark
Hamill
2:00 a.m. **The Making of Star**
Wars
1978, Documentary

FRIDAY, 11/24

7:00 p.m. **The Empire Strikes**
Back
1980, Science Fiction,
Harrison Ford
10:00 p.m. **The Making of**
The Empire Strikes Back
1981, Documentary
11:00 p.m. **The Empire**
Strikes Back
1980, Science Fiction,
Harrison Ford
2:00 a.m. **The Making of The**
Empire Strikes Back
1981, Documentary

SATURDAY, 11/25

9:00 a.m. **Odin: Photon Space**
Sailor Starlight
1992, Animation
7:00 p.m. **Return of the Jedi**
1983, Science Fiction, Mark
Hamill
10:00 p.m. **Return of the Jedi:**
Classic Creatures
1983, Documentary
11:00 p.m. **Return of the Jedi**
1983, Science Fiction, Mark
Hamill
2:00 a.m. **Return of the Jedi:**
Classic Creatures
1983, Documentary
3:00 a.m. **This Island Earth**
1955, Science Fiction, Jeff
Morrow

SUNDAY, 11/26

3:00 p.m. **The Thing**
1982, Science Fiction, Kurt
Russell
5:00 p.m. **Prince of Darkness**
1987, Horror, Donald
Pleasance

FRIDAY, 12/1

8:00 p.m. **The Utilizer**
1995, Science Fiction
12:00 a.m. **The Utilizer**
1995, Science Fiction

SATURDAY, 12/2

9:00 a.m. **Project A-KO** (let-
terboxed)
1991, Animation
2:00 p.m. **The Wasp Woman**
1960, Horror, Susan Cabot
3:30 p.m. **It Conquered the**
World
1956, Science Fiction, Peter
Graves

DECEMBER MOVIES

ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

5:00 p.m. The Utilizer

1995, Science Fiction

8:00 p.m. Xtro 2

1991, Science Fiction, Jan

Michael Vincent

12:00 a.m. Xtro 2

1991, Science Fiction, Jan

Michael Vincent

3:00 a.m. The Horrible Dr.

Hitchcock

1962, Horror, Barbara Steele

SUNDAY, 12/3

11:30 a.m. Beginning of the

End

1957, Science Fiction, Peter

Graves

1:00 p.m. Return of the Fly

1959, Horror, Vincent Price

3:00 p.m. Curse of the Fly

1965, Science Fiction, Brian

Donley

5:00 p.m. The Bug

1975, Horror, Bradford

Dillman

SATURDAY, 12/9

9:00 a.m. Project A-KO vs

Battles 1 & 2

1992, Animation

2:00 p.m. Santa Claus

Conquers the Martians

1964, Science Fiction, John

Call

4:00 p.m. The 4-D Man

1959, Science Fiction, Robert

Lansing

8:00 p.m. The Man Who Fell

to Earth

1976, Science Fiction, David

Bowie

12:00 a.m. The Man Who Fell

to Earth

1976, Science Fiction, David

Bowie

3:00 a.m. The Wizard of Mars

1964, Science Fiction, John

Carradine

SUNDAY, 12/10

3:00 p.m. Zardoz

1974, Science Fiction, Sean

Connery

5:00 p.m. Spectre (Reformat)

1977, Occult, Robert Culp

MONDAY, 12/11

9:00 p.m. Dinosaurs!

1960, Science Fiction, Ward

Ramsey

1:00 a.m. Dinosaurs!

1960, Science Fiction, Ward

Ramsey

TUESDAY, 12/12

9:00 p.m. Teenage Caveman

1958, Fantasy, Robert Vaughn

1:00 a.m. Teenage Caveman

1958, Fantasy, Robert Vaughn

WEDNESDAY, 12/13

9:00 p.m. One Million B.C.

1940, Prehistoric, Victor

Mature

1:00 a.m. One Million B.C.

1940, Prehistoric, Victor

Mature

THURSDAY, 12/14

9:00 p.m. Ice Man

1983, Science Fiction, Timothy

Hutton

1:00 a.m. Ice Man

1983, Science Fiction, Timothy

Hutton

SATURDAY, 12/16

9:00 a.m. 8Man After

(Reformat)

1992, Animation

2:00 p.m. The UFO Incident

1975, Science Fiction, James

Earl Jones

4:00 p.m. The Bamboo

Saucer

1968, Science Fiction, John

Ericson

8:00 p.m. Spontaneous

Combustion

1990, Horror, Brad Dourif

12:00 a.m. Spontaneous

Combustion

1990, Horror, Brad Dourif

3:00 a.m. She Waits (New)

1971, Horror, Patty Duke

SUNDAY, 12/17

3:00 p.m. Dune (TV Version)

1984, Science Fiction, Kyle

MacLachlan

SATURDAY, 12/23

9:00 a.m. Robot Carnival

1990, Animation

2:00 p.m. The Dark Secret of

Harvest Home

1978, Occult, Bette Davis

8:00 p.m. Not of This World

1991, Science Fiction, Lisa

Hartman

12:00 a.m. Not of This World

1991, Science Fiction, Lisa

Hartman

3:00 a.m. Santa Claus

Conquers the Martians

1964, Science Fiction, John

Call

SUNDAY, 12/24

2:00 p.m. The Return of

Captain Sinbad

1987, Animated, Roddy

McDowall

3:00 p.m. Santa Claus

Conquers the Martians

1964, Science Fiction, John

Call

5:00 p.m. World of Dracula

1979, Horror, Michael Nouri

SATURDAY, 12/30

9:00 a.m. Lily C.A.T.

Animation

2:00 p.m. Netherworld

1991, Horror, Michael

Bendetti

4:00 p.m. SSSSSSSSSSS

1973, Science Fiction, Strother

Martin

8:00 p.m. Nightflyers

1987, Science Fiction,

Catherine M. Stewart

12:00 a.m. Nightflyers

1987, Science Fiction,

Catherine M. Stewart

3:00 a.m. Ritual of Evil

1969, Supernatural, Louis

Jourdan

SUNDAY, 12/31

3:00 p.m. Invasion of the

Body Snatchers

1956, Science Fiction, Kevin

McCarthy

5:00 p.m. Night Gallery

(Pilot Movie)

1969, Supernatural, Roddy

McDowall

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From "Make my day" to "Make him an offer he can't refuse," here's a listing of the best-loved lines from a thousand films.

BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

SPEAKING ONLY HALF IN JEST, Dr. Johnson defined lexicographer—a breed to which he himself belonged—as “a harmless drudge.” And, in fact, the image most of us have of someone who compiles a reference book is a solemn, pasty-faced fellow who spends most of his life in tedious labor, whether scribbling in the library or squinting at his computer screen. As jobs go, it sounds pretty joyless.

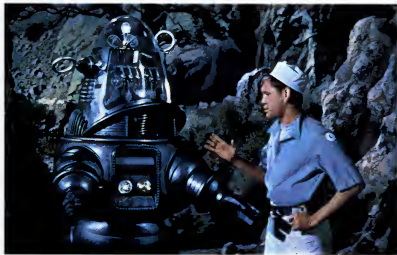
But Melinda Corey and George Ochoa must have had a ball putting together *The Dictionary of Film Quotations* (New York: Crown, 448 pp, \$24 pb), because they got to watch a thousand of their favorite movies, transcribing the more famous lines of dialogue—the

lines I myself most cherish from films such as *Jurassic Park* (“Clever girl!”—park ranger Bob Peck’s astonished tribute to the velociraptor that’s about to eat him), *The Lady Eve* (Barbara Stanwyck’s “I need him like the axe needs the turkey.”), *Honeymoon in Vegas* (Nicolas Cage’s “Did you get a job here?”—believe me, the funniest line in the movie, but you had to be there), and *Lawrence of Arabia* (nineteen separate entries, every one a beaut).

Nostalgia aside, the book serves as a reminder that a good screenwriter really earns his money. Even in execrable films like *Total Recall*, there are lines of loony inspiration (Ronny Cox’s taunt to Schwarzenegger, “In thirty seconds you’ll be dead, and I’ll blow this place up and be home in time for cornflakes.”—assuming they eat cornflakes on Mars). You’ll find knee-slappers even in so-so films like *Leap of Faith* (“A town this deep in the crapper’s got nowhere to turn but God.”), *The Lost Boys* (“One thing about living in Santa Carla I never could stomach was all the damn vampires.”), and *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (“I know you have a civil tongue in your head—I sewed it there myself.”).

Teenage Frankenstein isn’t the only camp classic included: There’s *Mommie Dearest* (“Don’t f— with me, fellas. This ain’t my first time at the rodeo.”); *Gold Diggers of 1933* (“Can you imagine me getting sentimental, the most hard-boiled dame on the Dirty White Way?”); and the endlessly and irresistibly quotable *Plan 9 from Outer Space* — “My friends,” intones Criswell in the epilogue, “you have seen this incident based on sworn testimony. Can you prove that it didn’t happen? Perhaps, on your way home, someone will tap you in the dark, and you will never know it, for they will be from outer space!”

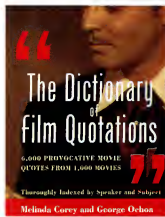
A more mercenary use for this reference book, of course, is as a bet-settler. A friend, near tears, quotes the final line of the 1939 *Hunchback of Notre Dame*: “Oh, if only I were made of stone!” You go scuttling off to your library and discover that the actual line was, “Why was I not made of stone like thee?” Another friend recites the famous line from *Casablanca*, “Play it again, Sam.” You open the *Dictionary of Film Quotations* and correct him; the actual line was simply, “Play

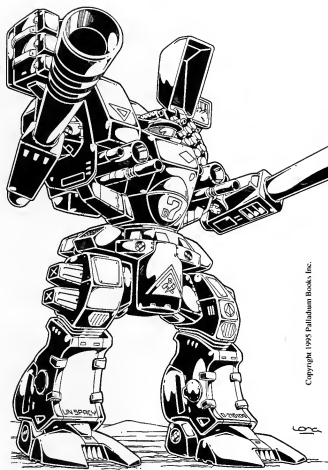


“I rarely use it myself, Sir. It promotes rust.”
Forbidden Planet’s Robby the Robot, referring to oxygen, as quoted in *The Dictionary of Film Quotations*.

obligatory ones such as “Rosebud,” “Hasta la vista, baby,” “Go ahead, make my day,” “May the Force be with you,” “I’m gonna make him an offer he can’t refuse,” and “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn.”—but also, it’s clear, choosing the lines they liked best.

The result is a reference book that’s ideal for browsing, offering the same nostalgic pleasure as those compilations of “classic moments from great Hollywood films” that they show on Oscar night. Corey and Ochoa are careful to include the lines we all remember best—Geena Davis’ “Be afraid. Be very afraid,” so memorably spooky it appeared on *The Fly*’s poster; Margaret Hamilton’s “Oh, what a world! What a world!”—as she melts in *The Wizard of Oz*; and the final frightened monologue of 2001’s Hal 9000 computer. But they also have a knack for picking some of the very





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it, Sam." If you have any friends left after this, you can correct them as well.

Though it sounds like a hefty amount, six thousand quotes from a thousand movies aren't all that many if you're a confirmed film buff. I wish the editors had included the haunting last lines of *The Terminator* and, for *The Shining*, something more than "He-e-e-e-e's Johnnie!" (They've found room for the beloved road sign in Oz—"TD TURN BACK IF I WERE YOU"—and several quotes from letters or print; why, then, couldn't they have included *The Shining's* unforgettable "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy?") I wish they had mentioned *The Go-Between*, whose opening from the L. P. Hartley novel ("The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.") is deservedly famous.

And though we're given a dozen hilarious examples from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, I missed my favorite moment, the wonderful exchange between Zero Mostel and Jack Gilford when the latter jabs a needle into Mostel's rear and Mostel lets out a howl of rage. "I thought you said you were impervious to pain," sneers Gilford. Replies the incredulous Mostel: "Not my own!"

Miscellaneous Writings by H. P. Lovecraft, edited by S. T. Joshi (Sauc City, WI: Arkham House, \$82 pp, \$29.95).

Lovecraft is one of those writers who's probably best discovered before one is old enough to vote. Or at least his fiction is; by the time one hits one's twenties, it becomes increasingly difficult to summon up frissons at the menace to humanity posed by tentacled Chulhu, slithering Shoggoths, and various New England wizards who can come back from the dead. (I speak, incidentally, as a lifelong fan—but one aware, from painful experience, that it's hard to make converts of fellow adults.)

What grows in fascination, however, is Lovecraft the man: his short, eccentric, somewhat solitary life in Providence, Rhode Island; his fondness for antiquarian jaunts up and down the East Coast; his astoundingly wide-ranging erudition, whether literary, historical, or scientific (augmented by a preternaturally keen memory); his deep-seated conservatism and hostility to the modern world; his bleak (but persuasive) nihilistic philosophy; with his cynicism about human pretensions, including his own; and his thoroughly endearing love of old New England—farms, fishing villages, cobblestone streets, Colonial architecture, and vistas of towns seen at twilight.

Lovecraft's opinions—sometimes pompous, often quirky, occasionally outrageous, always strongly held—fill his letters and postcards, which he dashed off to friends the way other people talk. (It's been estimated he wrote as many as 100,000 of them.) They also fill the essays and reviews he wrote for various magazines in the world of Amateur Journalism, a queer, long-varnished movement that linked scholars, writers, and

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Miscellaneous Writings presents the best of Lovecraft the essayist, as well as a generous sampling of juvenile stories, political polemics, letters to editors, literary criticism (much of it devoted to the aesthetics of verse), travel accounts (some written in a jocular mock-18th-century style), and plot ideas for horror tales—more than eighty selections in all. It's essential for Lovecraft devotees, and, for newcomers too jaded for the fiction, an excellent introduction to Lovecraft's thought.

The Steampunk Trilogy, by Paul Di Filippo (Four Walls Eight Windows, NY, 352 pp, \$20).

Normally this column leaves fiction to *Science Fiction Age* and *Realms of Fantasy*. But this debut book from prolific short-story writer and essayist Paul Di Filippo is unusual and ambitious enough to be worth mentioning, combining hard historical fact with the wildest of fancy and the broadest of slapstick humor. It's comprised of three novellas, the first set in teeming 19th-century London, the others in the more cerebral world of 19th-century Boston and its environs.

In "Victoria," which introduces us to the wealthy inventor Cosmo Cowperthwait, as well as to a silver-nosed sharpshooting villain named Lord Chuting-Payne and a passel of whores, thugs, and street people, Britain's innocent young queen has mysteriously disappeared. While the search goes on, lest the public be alarmed, Viscount Melbourne, the prime minister, secretly replaces her with one of Cowperthwait's creations, a bizarre creature, half-human, half-salamander, which answers to the name Victoria and, from a distance, might almost pass for the queen. The creature does not speak, but it very much enjoys sex; in fact, before assuming the throne, it had been the most popular choice at London's leading brothel.

Eros and erudition also meet in "Hottentots," in which the real-life Harvard biologist Louis Agassiz encounters everyone from Ralph Waldo Emerson and "Hank" Thoreau to the ace harpioneer Queequeg in his search for a magical body part removed from an African woman's corpse.

Before his quest is over, he even comes face to face with some classic Lovecraftian monsters lurking in the waters off Marblehead. The final tale, a quieter excursion called "Walt and Emily," sets up a rather believable romantic encounter between the poets Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, who, together with other luminaries of the time, voyage into a weird green, timeless dreamland worthy of fantasists George MacDonald and David Lindsay.

The result—when all three stories, with their various links to one another, are inhabiting the same book—is a sort of 19th-century *Ragtime* as enacted by Monty Python, a dizzying whirlpool of historical figures, creatures out of legend, characters out of literature, and the creations of Di Filippo's own remarkable imagination. □

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The Series Collection

She-Wolf of London

November 7—December 27, 1995

SHE-WOLF OF LONDON initially aired on January 6, 1992, with an episode written by co-creators Mick Garris (director of *Sleepwalkers* and the miniseries *The Stand*) and Tom McLoughlin (director of the telefilm *Stephen King's Sometimes They Come Back*).

"The people at Universal had said, 'Here are some titles we own—we'd like you to turn one of these into a series,'" recalls McLoughlin. "Both Mick and I have known John Landis for years and loved his *American Werewolf*, so when we saw *She-Wolf of London*, we wanted to do something along the same lines, with a young female werewolf, teaming her up with a non-believer who had to deal with this unreality. We wanted the repartee between them to be witty, in the vein of Howard Hawks, while taking the horror elements seriously. It was only later that they started to play down the horror and play up the comedy."

In the initial episode, Randi Wallace (Kate Hodge), an American student in London to study with Professor of Mythology Ian Matheson (Neil Dickson), decides to investigate British mythology by spending a night on the English moors—an experiment cut short by an animal attack. Shortly after she resumes her studies, a full moon works its magic on the cursed girl. She goes berserk, nearly killing Ian; the next day she wakes, naked, in a men's locker room, haunted by memories of rampage. The balance of the first show brings Randi face-to-face with the werewolf who attacked her and sets up the relationship between Randi and Ian, who is committed to ridding the girl of her curse.

The series avoids the predictable *Hulk* formula; the full moon only arrives every few episodes, providing no guarantee that Randi can solve each problem by "wolfing out." Lycanthropy is seldom the show's main theme; instead, it's the motive that leads Randi and Ian to pursue a series of adventures, matching their wits and their mortal powers against an array of preternatural enemies, including druids, zombies, mad scientists, ghosts, and succubi.

"The concept was *X-Files* before there was an *X-Files*, with a sense of humor," recalls co-creator Garris. "Universal had asked us to make *She-Wolf* as much like their 1946 movie as possible—but there wasn't very much to that film. We decided to have more fun with



Randi (Kate Hodge) and Ian (Neil Dickson) face trolls, a coven of witches, and a biker gang in *She-Wolf of London*.

it. Ian Matheson was a man who had book knowledge of a certain reality, who now had to face that strange reality in his own life."

Randi's adventures may have been too "wild" for the mainstream from the start but, as Garris and McLoughlin moved on to other projects and the series struggled for ratings, the plots grew even wilder. Starting with the fifth episode, the show was dominated by writers Lee Goldberg and William Rabkin, whose credits appear on 11 of the 20 one-hour episodes. These writers pit Randi and Ian against trolls, Cupid—even a man in a gorilla suit at a science fiction convention.

With the 16th episode, the show received a retooling. Ian's colorful family members were written out, as Ian and Randi moved to Los Angeles to make it big on TV. And they fell in love, facilitating the show's title change to *Love and Curses* (though the *She-Wolf* titles appear throughout the Channel's run). Their foes became still stranger, including a haunted movie palace, a band of foreign agents disguised as a biker gang and, in the show's bizarre swan song, a coven of witches selling Italian food to shape-shifters in an episode called "Mystical Pizza."

She-Wolf's writing is seldom up to the standards of the first episode, but the sheer recklessness of the plots often make up for the shortfall. The first 15 episodes also benefit from atmospheric British locations and the charm of the actors playing Ian's family, particularly Dorothea Phillips as dotty Aunt Elsa.

The chief asset of the show, however, is the lovely Kate Hodge, an actress whose time will surely come soon. Channel fans who enjoy her performance here will want to check out her equally fine work in the films *Texas Chainsaw Massacre III*, *The Hidden II*, and *Rapid Fire* (opposite the late Brandon Lee).

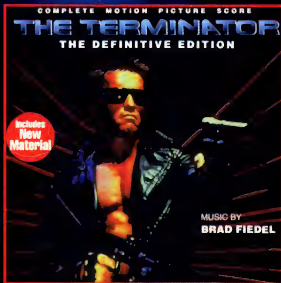
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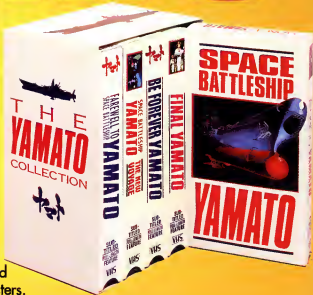
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Dear Editor:

I was delighted to see "The Star Blazers Revival; Yamato is Forever" article in the August edition of *SFE*. I would like to correct some of the history of Yamato and the details and statistics about the television programming.

The original TV series ran for seventy-seven episodes in both the United States and Japan. The statement that there were thirty-nine episodes in the American syndication is incorrect. I think the confusion came about when the seventy-seven-episode TV series was made into video cassettes which consist of thirty-nine volumes, not episodes. Each *Star Blazers* forty-five-minute volume consists of two episodes. There are three series each which contain thirteen volumes. When we decided to make the eighteen-volume *Star Blazers* collector's edition, we created three six-packs. Each of these collector's edition volumes consist of four or five episodes.

And you do not have to "mortgage your house" to buy them; you will save over \$100 if the eighteen-volume collector's edition is purchased at \$444.95 plus \$9.95 shipping and handling. The individual thirty-nine volume cassettes retail for \$19.95 each; simple mathematics will quickly show you that the money you save could be used toward your house mortgage.

(By the way, the planet Iscandar is spelled with a "c" not a "k.")

As the U.S. distributor and representative of the original creator, Yoshinobu Nishizaki, we want to thank our loyal fans for their continued support of *Star Blazers* and *Space Battleship Yamato*.

Sincerely,
Barry E. Winston, President
Voyager Entertainment, Inc.

Robert Martin, who reviewed the *Star Blazers* videos for us, says "I've been there, and I can tell you right now, on the planet itself they've always spelled it with a 'k'!"

In a calmer tone, Robert points out that your ad reads, "Each of these Collector's Editions contains...An entire Animated Adventure." He misconstrued this to mean one episode. His estimation of the fair value of the set was based on that misunderstanding. "All seventy-seven episodes?" he says. "I am such a dummy. Tell these nice people that I'm going to send in my order today, now that I know what a real value this set is!"

Of course, he also misquoted the title of your most recent release, which is *The Final Yamato*, not *The Final Battle*.

Mr. Flixman:

I have been reading *SFE* since it began publishing and have enjoyed the overall



One of the futuristic flappers from the seldom seen sci-fi musical, *Just Imagine!*

quality and lighter tone of the writing. However, one article that has not appeared, but seems overdue, is the one that deals with Sci-Fi Channel program acquisition.

Yes, we all know that Sci-Fi Entertainment has no influence over what airs on the Channel, though it can be surmised that you receive numerous letters and E-mails asking why this or that favorite movie or series has not appeared.

A piece on the nature of, and difficulties involved in program acquisition, might bring light to many eyes. The people who operate the channel might also benefit if viewers better understood how a movie or series comes to be aired in the first place!

Randy E. McCallister
Salt Rock, WV

We hoped to present just such an article in this issue, but had too much time-sensitive material on current television and films to be able to squeeze that in.

This year, the Channel has increased its accessibility in the U.S. by a wide margin, via significant adds by local cable outfits, as well as through direct satellite transmission—and now the Channel is international (see this month's "Channel News"). In '96, we expect to run several articles to better acquaint this wider viewership with the people and operations within the Sci-Fi Channel.

Dear SFE,

When we think of early science fiction films, two that often come to mind are the German *Metropolis* and the British *Things To Come*. An American contribution that is often overlooked is the 1930 Fox-Movietone SF musical (yes, I said musical) *Just Imagine!*

The plot concerns a man struck by lightning in 1930 who wakes to find himself in 1980—the Future—a New York with 250-story skyscrapers, flying cars, TV phones, full-course-meat pills, and test-tube-baby vending machines. Later a rocket trip to Mars finds an exotic place where the inhabitants are all born as twins (one good and one evil), and chorus lines of scantily clad dancing flappers. The film's other attractions include an early appearance by a 19-year-old Maureen O'Sullivan; a quarter-million-dollar model of 1980 New York inspired by, but more elaborate than, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*; and spaceship models later sold to and used in the Flash Gordon serials.

I have never seen this film—is anyone else dying to see this, as I am? Please show us *Just Imagine!* on the Channel!

Herbert L. Kaplan
North Bellmore, NY

We've passed your suggestion on to acquisitions. In the meantime, you may want to check out Forrest J. Ackerman's *Wonderama*, a publication featuring numerous rare stills from that production, many of which were digitally restored by our own staffer, Robert "the dummy" Martin. Though initially published in 1994, many comics specialty stores should have it in stock.

Dear Mr. Flixman:

The craft from *Babylon 5* on page 60 (October *SFE*) does not look like the *Agamemnon*, but more like a transport or drone. The *Agamemnon* resembles the *Leonov* in the movie 2010, as I'm sure you already know.

By the way, where can I get a picture of the *Agamemnon*?

Alexandra Streich
DHDM77A@prodigy.com

That ship is the *Skydancer*, a one-person vehicle from the first season; we still haven't figured out exactly where the misinformation came from. In general, we were very disappointed with the graphics that accompanied that article, and are currently working with the folks at B-5 on arrangements to ensure that the program receives better graphic representation in these pages in future issues. We expect to do a piece on *Foundation Imaging*, where B-5's digital effects are created, early in the new year; we'll make an effort to include a shot of the real *Agamemnon* when that happens.

We continue to look to the mail to help us determine our course for future issues. Reach us via E-mail at 75663.2701@compuserve.com; The Dominion address for the Sci-Fi Channel is address is <http://www.scifi.com>; and paper mail goes to Sci-Fi Entertainment, 441 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 22070.

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